

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

By
G. T. HUTCHINSON

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi: sed omnes inlacrimabiles
Urgentur ignotique longa
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro

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* From "Nimrod's" *Hunting Tours*, by courtesy of Messrs. John Lane,
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INTRODUCTION

IN 1935 the Heythrop Hunt completes a century of independent existence. At various times it has claimed the attention of such celebrated sporting raconteurs as Nimrod, Cecil, and the Druid. It has now been decided to collect and republish their articles, with illustrations of the hounds, as depicted at different periods by contemporary artists, and to provide the necessary background by a short history of the Hunt. I have to thank many past and present members of the Hunt for their kind assistance in compiling this, and the Duke of Beaufort for putting the hunting diaries of the sixth Duke and his huntsmen at my disposal. The work has been carried out with the sanction and approval of the Hunt Committee, but for such expressions of opinion as are inevitable in a book of this nature, I must accept the sole responsibility.

The real problem is how to present the material available to the reader. It must be admitted that there is a certain family likeness about most of the accounts of notable runs. "Pray don't trouble yourself, my dear fellow," said Captain Bouncey, when Mr. Sponge was endeavouring to inflict on him the exploits of Sir Harry Scattercash's hounds,

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“we know all about it—found—checked—killed: killed—checked—found.” It is too much to hope that the exact itineraries of the Heythrop foxes can really interest many members of the reading public. It is true that there are certain enthusiasts who open their *Times* every morning and turn automatically to the cruelly condensed account of the hunt in which they have taken part on the previous day. But will they wish to wade through the records of long-forgotten seasons, or to study extended pedigrees of the hounds that provide them with their sport? Mindful of these difficulties I have merely attempted to give a brief account of the fortunes of the Hunt during the past century, and have included only such episodes as appear to have some special interest to-day.

The final test of literary success—at any rate to a Hunt Secretary—is that the book should sell. With this object in view it is being produced at a time, and at a price, when it may provide a convenient and economical Christmas present for any one connected with the Hunt. Every copy sold, after payment of expenses, will provide an additional vote for a Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution pension at the forthcoming election, for which I regret to say there are no less than three candidates who have farmed in the Heythrop country.

G. T. HUTCHINSON.

November, 1935.

CHAPTER I
THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT AND
PHILIP PAYNE

FROM *Baily's Hunting Directory* one may learn that "the Heythrop country, which lies in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, extends about 15 miles N. to S. by 30 miles E. to W. On the north it adjoins the Warwickshire; on the west the North Cotswold, Cotswold, and V.W.H. (Cirencester); on the south the Old Berks and the V.W.H. (Cricklade); and on the east the Bicester. It is partly a wall country; in the vale flying fences; no banks. Roughly speaking, about 50 per cent. is plough, 35 per cent. pasture and the remainder woodland." If one would supplement this information by reference to the maps, it appears that the country rises gradually northwards from the upper Thames valley above Oxford to the Cotswold hills, that much of it is more than five hundred feet above sea-level, and that it is intersected by the valleys of the Evenlode and the Windrush and their tributary brooks. Geologically it lies mainly on the oolitic limestone, which has provided most of the building material for the district, and the thin soil of the uplands consists of disintegrated limestone:

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the lias formation, which underlies it, is revealed in the holding clay of the miniature vales. The proportion of grass to plough has increased considerably since the War.

Fox-hunters are a matter-of-fact race, yet one may feel that the description contained in Mr. Baily's compendium does rather less than justice to the charm of a country of bare wild uplands, interspersed with green well-timbered valleys and picturesque villages, which has a character and a curious attraction of its own. At any rate, it has been described by one sportsman of discernment as "a good country to ride to the meet in," and for fox-hunters one may perhaps leave it at that.

Though unknown to history it is not without historical associations. The Romans realized the merits of these healthy slopes and placed their villas there centuries before Oxford came into existence. In the Middle Ages it was traversed regularly by the trains of pack horses carrying wool and stone from the Cotswolds to the great waterway of the Thames. During the Great Rebellion the district was the scene of frequent skirmishing, while the Royalist head-quarters were at Oxford: the last regular engagement was fought by Sir John Astley at Stow on the Wold. Fifty years later the victor of Blenheim was rewarded with an Italian palace, placed in the most typically English surroundings, on the outskirts of Woodstock. The village of

Churchill produced Warren Hastings, who spent what may have been the happiest years of his life as a country gentleman at Daylesford.

It is natural to suppose that a portion of England consisting of forest and woodlands to harbour game, and open rideable wolds over which game could be readily pursued, had always been hunted in some form or other. We know that King Henry II hunted from Woodstock, and both Queen Elizabeth and King James I hunted the stag in the woodlands of Ditchley and Wychwood. The royal trophies may still be seen in the house at Ditchley. After the death of King Charles I his friend Dr. Juxon, afterwards Archbishop, living in retirement at Little Compton kept a pack of harriers and "had them so well ordered and hunted, chiefly by his own skill and direction, that they exceeded all other hounds in England for the pleasure and orderly hunting of them." Yet on one occasion they ran through Chipping Norton churchyard, while the Puritans were engaged in public worship, and a complaint was made to Oliver Cromwell. "Pray," said Oliver, in reply, "do you think that the Bishop prevailed on the hare to run through the churchyard at that time?" "No, and please your Highness, I did not directly say he did, but through the holy ground the hare did go at that time." "Get you gone," rejoined the Protector, "and let me hear no such frivolous complaints; whilst the Bishop continues not to give my government any

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offence, let him enjoy his diversion of hunting unmolested.”¹

In the eighteenth century Lord Foley came with his hounds from Worcestershire to North Oxfordshire, and hunted the fox there. But authentic records of fox-hunting in what is now the Heythrop country date from the time that the fifth Duke of Beaufort brought a regular establishment into it for that purpose, probably about the year 1770. Hounds had been kept at Badminton certainly since the beginning of the century, a pack of harriers and a pack of staghounds, and the kennel entries for an almost unbroken period since 1728 are still in existence. The fifth Duke had a long minority, and after he succeeded to the family pack, seems to have decided that the fox was a better quarry than the stag. Perhaps improved cultivation and the general increase of enclosures in the latter half of the century made it desirable that the deer should be confined to parks and demesnes. However that may be, a pack of fox-hounds was evolved from the material available at Badminton, and was brought to Oxfordshire for the greater part of the hunting season, first to Cornbury and afterwards to Heythrop, which was taken on lease from the Earl of Shrewsbury. From contemporary descriptions it appears that these hounds revealed something of their staghound and harrier origin. They were big powerful animals with a lot of bone ; they hunted with a great

¹ *Memoirs of Archbishop Juxon*, by the Rev. W. H. Marsh.

cry, and were very staunch on the line of a hunted fox—just as their ancestors had learnt to stick to their hunted stag round the foiled woodlands of Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire. In colour they were mostly lemon or badger pie, the colour that is best known to-day with some of the old harrier packs of the west country. The Hunt servants were turned out in green plush livery—the old stag-hunting colour.

The sixth Duke succeeded in 1803, and like his father preferred the recreations and light duties of a great landlord to the more exacting obligations of public life. He won a high place in the esteem and affection of his contemporaries, and if he made no name in history, he should at least be remembered by every fox-hunter as the owner of “that undeniable hound the Beaufort Justice,” immortalized by Surtees, whose blood is probably to be found in half of the fox-hounds in England to-day. He was born and bred a fox-hunter, and hunted from Badminton and Heythrop until failing health compelled him to give up the Oxfordshire country only a few months before his death in 1835. He has left for posterity records complete in almost every detail of fox-hunting during the period. Thorough and methodical in his sport, as in his other activities, he kept a diary himself, and apparently required his huntsmen to keep a proper record of their hunting days. From these diaries, assisted by the more lively narration of an occasional visit by Nimrod, it

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should be possible to reconstruct a tolerably accurate picture of fox-hunting in the Heythrop country a hundred years ago.

In 1803 the Duke engaged as his huntsman Philip Payne, who came from Cheshire, where he had learnt his hunting in the kennels of Mr. George Heron and Sir Peter Warburton. He carried the horn until 1826, when he was succeeded by William Long. The latter was son of the stud groom at Badminton and remained in the service of three successive Dukes for over forty years. He started his career as a lad riding to and fro with the post-bag. He was a natural horseman and a born fox-hunter, so was appointed second whip in 1807, subsequently promoted first whip, and then huntsman. It is recorded that during this apprenticeship of eighteen years he always groomed two horses before hunting, and cleaned his own horse and kit when he came home. As whipper-in he never had a second horse out, and he rode the same horse, Milkman, on an average of twenty hunting days a season for seventeen seasons.

When Long became huntsman William Todd was promoted from second to first whipper-in, and Jem Hills was engaged as second whipper-in. Though only twenty-five years old the latter had already seen a lot of hunting. He described himself as "by an earth-stopper out of an huntsman's daughter." At the age of ten he was whipping-in to a pack of harriers in Kent. He was afterwards second

whipper-in to his brother Tom Hills in Surrey, and at eighteen was kennel huntsman and first whip to Colonel Wyndham in Sussex. He was with William Long at Badminton and Heythrop for five seasons, and spent five more as first whip in the V.W.H. country, whence he returned to hunt hounds in the Heythrop country for thirty seasons until his retirement in 1865. By these fortunate circumstances the present Heythrop country was hunted by three huntsmen only during a period of sixty years, and each of the last two had whipped-in to his predecessor. Continuity in kennel policy should be assured by the fact that there were but two Masters between 1770 and 1835, and three huntsmen between 1803 and 1865.

A characteristic description of Philip Payne is given by Nimrod—"a man of sense and discernment, greater than is usually met with in persons of his cast of life." From the old print he might be described as a solid man, and a similar impression is gained from the entries of his hunting days in his diaries. There is never a word too much, but the account is complete. If the day calls for special comment, this is inserted briefly in the margin. The general procedure and characteristics varied little from year to year. In the last fortnight in August hounds started to hunt the woodlands of the Badminton country. Towards the end of September they came to Heythrop and hunted mainly in the woodlands—in Wychwood forest, which at that

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time included the Swinbrook woods and so extended practically from the Windrush to the Evenlode, or in the long chain of woods (some of which have since disappeared) which ran from the Evenlode east to Ditchley and Kiddington. The lesser woodlands of Tar Wood, Tangle, Bruern and Bould Wood, Worton Heath, and Sarsgrove were visited less frequently at the beginning of the season. The expression "cub-hunting" is not used, and though Payne drew the coverts where "young foxes" were reported, there is no suggestion of anything like holding up cubs; with slower hounds behind them, the "young foxes" appear to have run like the old ones—and good points were often made quite early in the season. The hounds were taken back to Badminton for Christmas, but returned to Heythrop in February, and hunted there until the last week in April, when the earth-stoppers' feast was held and the season ended.

The so-called "Oxfordshire country" hunted was more extensive than it is to-day. The northern and eastern boundaries appear to have been much the same, but on the south side the woodlands of Tackley, Whitehill, and Begbroke were regularly hunted: also Tar Wood and Bradwell Grove, and at one time Williamstrip and Bibury: north of that the Duke hunted from Farmington by Bourton-on-the-Water to Eyford. To us it must appear a big area to deal with, particularly as the hounds were at Badminton every September and January. But

the explanation is that hounds covered far more country in a day's hunting—whether drawing or running—than they do now. Generally speaking, they drew only the principal woods which exist to-day, besides a few gorses which have disappeared: there is no mention of the many “little places” which frequently hold a fox since the fox population has increased. For example—from an Eyford meet it was not unusual to draw the whole of the country to Oddington Ashes, or—on the other side—to draw all the coverts on the eastern boundary from Dean Hill to Tackley and Whitehill on the same day. And apparently the Master had no hesitation about drawing the same covert as often as he liked—they were mostly big places, and if the foxes were driven out of them, they soon got back again. Thus hounds would sometimes be in the Ditchley coverts four and five times in a month. After a fox was found, the hunting might be described as continuous. Philip Payne measured his hunts by the hour—his hounds got over a great deal of country, whether they happened to make a point or not; if scent was bad they took longer about it—but apparently they continued to hunt. The proportion of foxes found and accounted for—either killed in the open, dug, or marked to ground—was astonishingly high for a bad scenting country. But the best description of the sport is given by Philip Payne himself, and obviously was not written with a view to publication. For the

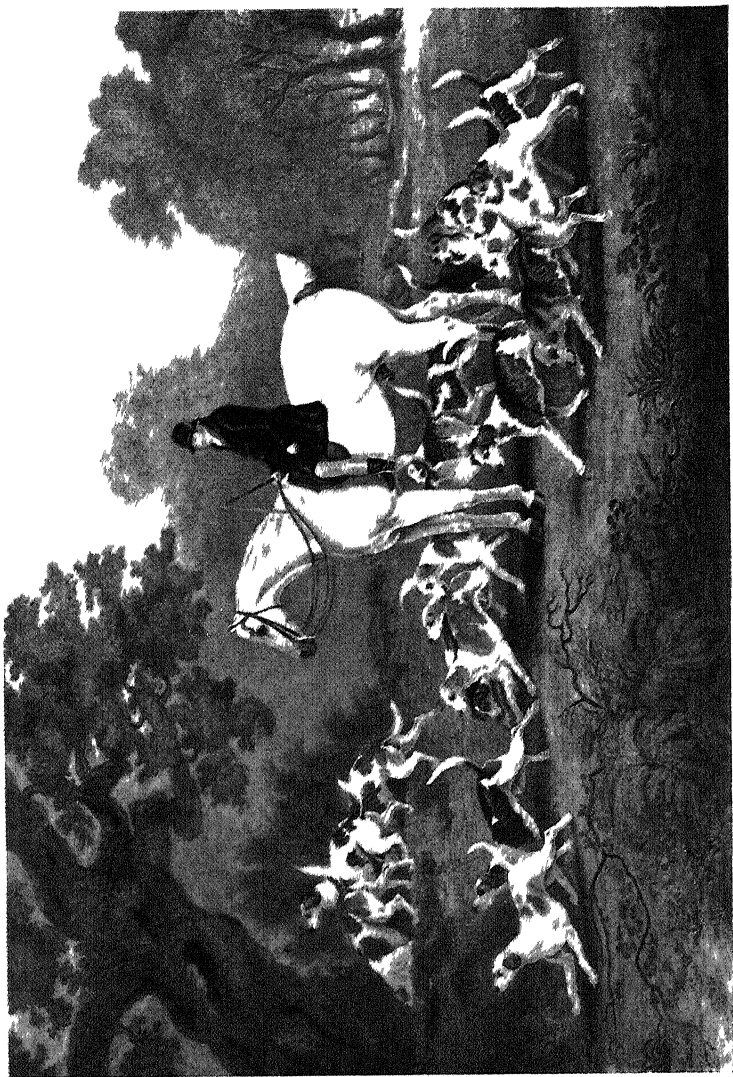
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convenience of the reader modern nomenclature and spelling has been adopted, though the original is far more picturesque. The accounts selected cover the period from 1815 to 1825.

1815. *March 15th.* Meet at Saisgrove. Found, ran to Swailsford Bridge, lost our fox: no scent. Went back to Sarsgrove. Found, ran a ring by Chipping Norton and back to the stone quarry by the Grove; run twenty minutes hard. Then tried Churchill Heath. Found, ran a ring there, through Bruern and Bould Heath to Westcote, over the field to Broad Rissington, turned to the left to the Heath, over it by Wyck, through Gawcomb, by Icomb, through Maugersbury Spinney to the village: killed him. Run two hours: the first part for one hour ran very hard: hunting from Gawcombe to Maugersbury, there he jumped up, and we killed him. Good day.

1815. *November 15th.* Meet at Bourton Bridge. Tied Aston Dean. A fox stole away. Ran a ring, twenty minutes to Bourton town, lost by the church. Then tried Poors-plot, and Aston Grove, to Farmington Grove. Found a leash of foxes: one ran by the Poors-plot, turned for Cold Aston town and crossed the water to the Ash Spinney above Eyford, then by the Slate Pits to Guiting Thorns, to Lower Guiting Brake, there killed. Run one hour and thirty-five minutes, ran first half-hour very hard. A very good run indeed. Frost began in the night and snow.

Note.—A six-mile point. "Poors-plot," better known as Bourton Poor Lots, was a famous gorse covert just outside Bourton-on-the-Water, on the road to Cold Aston.



PHILIP PAYNI, HUNTSMAN TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BLAUJOKI ON HIS
FAVOURITE HORSE CHERRINGTON, WITH HOUNDS
11cm x 16.5cm, by K. Turner, after the painting by K. B. Davis

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1816. *November 27th.* Meet at Tangle. Found in the Coombes, ran by Hell Brake, by Barrington Bushes, crossed the water between Dodds Mill and Broad Rissington to Farmington Grove, almost to Aston Grove: checked there. Run thirty-five minutes hard. Then tied back to Farmington Grove, got up to the fox, and ran by Farmington, by Northleach, by Hampnett, over Stowell Park to Chedworth woods. Stopped the hounds for they were running in three parts. Stopped them in Star Wood. Run two hours; not a very good-scent at last. Good day's sport.

Note.—*The point from Tangle Coombes to Aston Grove is 6 miles, and from the Coombes to Star Wood 11 miles. Practically the whole of this hunt must have been over light arable land.*

1817. *December 17th.* Meet at Sarsgrove. Did not find. Tried Chadlington Wood: did not find. Found in the Norrells: ran through Churchill Heath, and back through Norrells, and left Lyneham on the left hand, turned along the side of the turnpike road by the Pillars, through Sarsgrove, over Chadlington Downs, and left Dean on the right hand, over Spelsbury Downs to Shilcott Wood, through Foxholes Wood, by Ditchley House, over the Park, through Sheers Copse, through Wootton Woods; there changed our fox, and ran through the plantations in Blenheim Park to the Twenty Acres, there lost the fox: the scent got bad. Run two hours and a half. A very good run but not a good scent.

Note.—*The point from the Norrells to Blenheim Park is 10 miles.*

1817. *December 22.* Meet at Farmington Grove. Found, ran by Farmington Village, by Turkdean,

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through Hazleton Coppice, by the village, over Stowell Park, over Compton Park, through Withington Woods, and killed by Colesbourn House, a good fox. Run one hour and twenty-five minutes—only two checks—11 miles. Good run.

Note.—*The point from Farmington Grove to Colesbourn is 9 miles.*

1818. *March 11th.* Meet at Barton Bushes. Tried the Bushes and More Grove, Maiden Bushes, and Tackley Heath and Wood, Rousham, More's Garden to Whitehill. Found a leash of foxes: ran over Tackley Park and Heath, through the Wood, by Barton, by the Holt, by Steeple Aston, by the Fishpond, through Aston gardens, by Dunstew Gorse, through Worton Heath, Great Tew Park, by Little Tew, to Heythrop Park: went to ground. Run two hours: some very good hunting, but a middling scent. Good run.

Note.—*The point from Whitehill to Heythrop is 9 miles.*

1818. *March 21st.* Meet at Farmington Grove. Found, ran by Clapton, by Bourton on the Water, by Aston Dean, by Guiting Brake, by the Town, through Guiting Wood, and killed two fields beyond the wood. Run one hour thirty minutes hard. Col. Berkeley's hounds joined us at Guiting Brake with 21 couple, and I had 17 couple. A good run.

Note.—*The point from Farmington Grove is 8 miles.*

1818. *November 28th.* Meet at Wootton. Tried Dornford Grove to Whitehill. Found, ran over Tackley Park and back through Whitehill, over Campsfield, through Begbrooke, Burleigh Wood and Pinsley Wood, by Handborough Town, through the Cliffs and Coombe Woods, by the new park, over part of Blenheim

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Park, and through the end of Wootton Woods, by Woodleys, through Glympton Wood and Berrings, through Hill Wood, Box Wood and Oak Ridings, Bottom Wood, and over Charlbury field, by Spelsbury, and lost him going for Sarsden. Run three hours and a half. The scent altered in Charlbury field: came to hunting there until we had no scent whatever. Good run.

Note.—The point from Whitehill is about 8 miles. A remarkable woodland hunt.

1819. *March 8th.* Meet at Sarsgrove. Fox stole away before the hounds got in: no scent. Tried Norrells and Churchill Heath to Bruern. Found, ran a ring there by Foscot, by Bledington, through Gawcombe, by Wick, by Rissington, by Lower Slaughter, and turned by Bourton on the Water, and left Eyford on the right hand, over Aston Dean, and came to hunting by Cold Aston Grove, and went to ground by Farmington Grove. Run two hours and a half. A very good run.

Note.—The point from Bruern is 8 miles. Farmington Grove is 12 miles from Sarsgrove where hounds met.

1819. *December 21st.* Meet at Heythrop. Found in the Long Wood, ran by Dunthrop through Hide Wood to Banbury Gate, over Poors-plot, by Showell Farm, and left Pomfret Castle and Litte Tew on the left hand down to Heythrop, to the Warren, there went to ground., Nearly caught him at the earth but could not hold him.* Ran very hard twenty-five minutes. Then tried the Hide Gorse. Found, ran a ring by Poors-plot and back through Hide Wood, by Priory Coppice, Over Norton Heath, crossed the Oxford road by Chapel House to Over Norton, turned on the left hand by Rollright Coombes, through Whichford Wood, and killed our fox

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going for Weston Park. Ran into him and killed in the open field. Run one hour and twenty-seven minutes : hard day. A good run.

Note.—The point from Hide Wood is 6 miles.

1820. *December 1st.* Meet at Ditchley. Tried Dead Man's Ridings and Temple Wood. A fox stole away, and got up to him in Oak Ridings and ran over the Park, through the gardens, and Temple Wood, Shilcott Wood, by Spelsbury, over Spelsbury Down, by Lidstone, by Chalford Farm, there came to a check : then over Chipping Norton Race Ground, by Chapel House on the right hand, over Mr. Doran's Park, by Starveall, to Little Rollright. Stopped the hounds, it was such a fog. The first twenty minutes was very hard, after that it was all hunting, in all two hours and a half. Good run. A foggy day.

Note.—The point is about 9 miles.

1820. *December 23rd.* Meet at Sandford. Found in Worton Heath. Ran rings there through Conygree to Heythrop. Turned by Little Tew, Showell Farm, and left Swerford on the right hand, and left Hook Norton on right, by Rollright, by Rollright Coombes to Whichford Wood. Run a ring or two and went to ground in a drain. Dugged him and killed him. Run one hour and twenty minutes very hard. Frost began. A very good run indeed. 15 miles.

Note.—The point from Worton Heath to Whichford Wood is 9 miles—considerably more as hounds ran.

1821. *March 5th.* Meet at Stockbridge. Found a brace of foxes in Longborough Leys. Ran a ring by Banks Fee, and ran to a drain by Donnington. Run twenty minutes. Then tried Payne's Copse, to Odding-

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ton Ashes. Found a brace of foxes, ran a ring about there by Upper Oddington village, by Maugersbury, by Upper Ashes, by Idbury village, to Bruern, to Churchill Heath, to Kingham by Bledington, and ran in a drain of Peglars. A fox came by at the same instant as our fox went into the drain. We ran him by Oddington Ashes by Iccomb, by Gawcombe, by Westcote. The fox was headed from Gawcombe to Westcote, and brought us to hunting to the top of Rissington Heath. Then began running by Upper Rissington, turned for Clapton, by Poors-plot, to the Barn by Poors-plot; lost. Run in all five hours and twenty minutes. A very hard day. All the horses stopped but the Duke's, Mr. Fagg's, Mr. Lucy's, mine and Wm. Todd's.

Note.—The point from Oddington Ashes is 6 miles.

1821. November 30th. Meet at Sarsgrove. Found, came away and crossed the road by Chalford Farm, by Chapel House, by Chipping Norton, by Over Norton, and left Choicehill Farm on the left hand, by Starveall Farm, by Walk Farm, and crossed the Banbury Road almost to Little Tew carths. There the scent got very bad. Stopped the hounds. Run one hour. Then tried Poors-plot Gorse and got on our fox again and ran by Dunthorp, and back by Heythrop, through the Hide Wood, over the Poors-plot, by Showell Farm, by Salford, through Sarsgrove, by the Pillars, over Chadlington field, crossed Lime Kiln Lane, by Chalford Farm, by the Race Ground, crossed the road by Chapel House, and killed on the Common by Priory Farm. Run one hour and thirty-five minutes. Very good day's sport.

1821. December 15th. Meet at Ditchley. Found in

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Dead Man's Ridings and ran rings about this wood, Out Wood, Box Wood, and back through Temple Wood to Henley Knap, through Dead Man's Ridings and Temple Wood and ran in the drain in the pleasure grounds. Run two hours. Dugged a brace of foxes out, and ran through Temple Wood, through Henley Knap, through Dead Man's Ridings, by the Kennel, by Out Wood, by the Lodge, by Hill Wood, by Glympton Park, by Kiddington, left Juniper Heath on the right, and killed our fox two fields from Radford at five o'clock at night. Run one hour and fifteen minutes. It was so dark that we could not see the hounds a hundred yards before us when we killed. Good run.

1822. *November 9th.* Meet at Farmington Grove. Found, ran a ring by the New Park and lost our fox, as the frost just going off. Run twenty minutes. Then came to Barrington Spinney, found in some rushes, ran by Windrush over the road, by Black Pits, and turned to the left hand and left Barrington Gate on the right hand, and crossed the river by Taynton, over the field by Barrington Bushes to Tangle, and killed in the Coombes. Run fifty minutes very hard ; two horses died. A very good run.

1823. *November 11th.* Meet at Sarsgrove. Found two brace of foxes and ran past Chipping Norton, by the Race Ground, by Lidstone to Heythrop, over the Park, by the Chapel, through the Long Wood, by Dunthrop ; left Little Tew on the right, by Great Tew, and killed going for Lower Worton : dog fox. Run one hour and six minutes. A very sharp run.

Note.—The point is 8 miles. This run was nearly straight and the time would be considered fast to-day.

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1823. *November 26th.* Meet at Farmington Grove. Found and killed a fox. Found again, and ran by Sherborne, by the Cow Pastures, by Clapton, by Bourton, and turned by the Poors-plot, through the Grove by Sherborne, and killed in the Park. Run one hour and fifteen minutes hard. Then tried the Cow Pastures and killed a fox. Then a fox was seen to go away. Ran by Dodds Mill, Barrington Spinneys, by the Park, over Taynton field, over Barrington Heath, through the Bushes and Hell Brake, over Fifield Heath, by the town, Milton field, through Bruern, round Bould and Foscot, by Bledington, by the Mill, through Churchill Heath, to the Upper Norrells, and killed him in view. Run one hour and twelve minutes. A remarkably good run as I ever saw : a great many horses tired and some died.

Note.—The point from Sherborne Cow Pastures to the Norrells is 7 miles. This run must have been very fast.

1823. *December 10th.* Meet at Sandford. Tried Conygree, did not find. Found in Worton Heath. Went away to the left of Upper Worton, by Ilbury Farm to Barford St. John, by Milcombe, by Buttermilk Farm for the Scotch buildings above Great Tew, by Swerford Heath, and turned to the left hand through the park, and turned for Pomfret Castle : then turned under the end of Swerford Park, and turned under Great Rollright, and turned by Showell Farm to the turnpike road going to Chipping Norton. Headed back under the Poors-plot, Priory Mill, Lord Edward's Gorse, into Over Norton Park. There came to a check and was taken to a fresh fox, and ran him through Salford Spinneys, and hunted him with a very bad scent almost to the Larges and lost him. The run from Worton Heath to Over Norton

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Park was one hour and forty minutes without one cast of the hounds by me. Left our hunted fox in Over Norton.

Note.—Larges on the Hill is the present Cross Hands Inn.

1824. November 24th. Meet at Ditchley. Found in Sheers Copse. Ran through Oak Ridings, Bottom Wood, over the Park, through Box Wood, Out Wood, Glympton Wood, Hill Wood, and there came to a check. A fox was seen to cross the road by Glympton Park. Went after him, and ran by Ludwell Farm, over Juniper Heath, by Barton, almost to Rousham Moor, by Aston Dean, to Steeple Aston, to Middle Aston, to North Aston, and there the fox waited : got up to him, and ran a ring by the Warren and back to Middle Aston, and killed below the house. Some hunting and some hard running for two hours and twenty minutes. Good day's sport.

Note.—The point from Sheers Copse to North Aston is 8 miles.

1825. March 9th. Meet at Sandford. Tried Worton Heath ; did not find. Tried Price's Gorse. Found, and run began down to the river, and turned by Bloxham Bridge by King's Sutton : turned for Banbury town end, by Crouch Hill to Wroxton Park and killed. Run one hour and twenty minutes hard. A fine run.

Note.—The point is about 8 miles.

1825. December 19th. Meet at Stonesfield. Tried Coombe and Notoaks, did not find. Tried Wootton Wood. Found, and ran through Lower King's Wood, by Box Wood, through Asterleigh Wood, by Radford, over the field to Great Tew, and left Grove Ash on the right hand for South Newington Field, by Buttermilk Hall, and left Barford village to the right hand and crossed

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the water to Bloxham and killed. Run one hour and a half hard, thirty-five minutes very hard to Tew. A very good run.

Note.—*The point from Wootton Wood to Bloxham is 11 miles. Hounds finished 12 miles from the place where they met.*

1826. *March 8th.* Meet at Eyford. A brace of foxes was halloed from Slaughter Gorse. Run by Eyford Slatepits, where he crossed over to Swell Common, to the top of Guiting Hill, when he turned to the right down to the Lots and straight up Guiting Hill, where, headed, he turned up to the rabbit warren down to Kington village, across the road leading to Ford, and put his head right towards the Great Woods leaning to the right to Pinnock Wood, and came out on the lower side, towards the Great Woods, but kept alongside the cover to the Cross Hands, turned a little to the left across the Bottoms for Farmcote Wood; headed by a sheep dog, and turned alongside the hill for Stancote. He crossed the road leading from Winchcombe to Broadway by the Keeper's house to Toddington Park and killed. Run one hour and thirty-five minutes. Near the seat of Charles Tracey, Esq., near the twelve-mile stone on the Stow road to Tewkesbury. Run 11 miles straight.

Note.—*Most of this hunt must have been through unknown country now hunted by the North Cotswold.*

1826. *March 17th.* Meet at Boulter's Barn. Found in Kingham Gorse, and ran to a drain by Churchill Mill. Went in. Run ten minutes. Went to Oddington Ashes, found a brace of foxes, and ran through Manuel Spinney, over Adlestrop Hill, Chastleton Hill and left Chastleton on the right for Brook End. Turned to Longborough Leys, turned to right, and bore for the

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Four Shire Stone, and turned up by Bourton Common, by Sezincote, through Bourton Wood, and left Spring Hill on the right hand, through Campden Wood to Weston Park Wood, and there went to ground. Run two hours and a half hard. A very fine run.

Note.—The point from Oddington Ashes to Weston Park Wood is 11 miles.

CHAPTER II

THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT AND WILL LONG

IT is quite clear that hunting with Philip Payne in the early nineteenth century provided sport of a type which cannot be reproduced to-day in the Heythrop country or anywhere else. In the past fifteen years the Heythrop Hunt has not had half a dozen runs comparable in time or distance with those which were enjoyed every season a hundred years ago. This may perhaps be regarded as a somewhat melancholy comment on the result of our efforts to evolve the perfect fox-hound, and to improve the science of fox-hunting. It is true that the conditions are different. In those days there were fewer foxes—but it may be noted that the Duke generally managed to find enough foxes for his purpose, and that there were few blank days. Will Long was accustomed to note the number of litters reported in the country every season by two men—presumably earth-stoppers—as part of their summer duty. Each of them usually located about twenty litters: in one season they found fifty between them.

It is also true that foxes were stouter and wilder

then—in the sense that they knew more country. Nowadays, with a better food supply, they are disinclined to face the unknown perils attached to railways and main roads and an increased population : they tend to live within a comparatively small area. The so-called “ good fox ” is something of a rarity. But there are still considerable tracts of country where the conditions are much the same now as they were then. For example, in the year 1811 the Duke’s hounds met in Wychwood Forest on the 16th, 18th, 20th and 22nd of April, and killed six foxes above ground. The odds against a similar performance to-day would be considerable. The fact is that the hounds of those days seem to have possessed the quality of sticking to their fox, and accounting for their fox, in a way which is denied to their descendants. Is this because in the famous grass countries, which set the fashion for so long, all other considerations were sacrificed to pace? A racing pack, assisted by a gifted huntsman, was able to bring off a sort of *tour de force*, and to provide with some regularity the glorified form of steeplechase demanded by the hard riders in the golden age of Leicestershire. It was only natural that such a fashion should spread to the provinces, and even to those bad scenting countries where the conditions were all against its success. Nowadays it is often said, even by fox-hunters of experience : “ We must have fast hounds, because the horses are so much faster than they used to be.” But this surely repre-

sents a complete misconception of the sport and has perilous implications. So long as our primary object is to hunt a fox to death, the pace at which operations are conducted must be determined by the noses of the hounds. If hounds are bred or encouraged to go faster than their noses, it is no longer fox-hunting; a drag hunt or a paper chase would provide an agreeable and convenient alternative.

Whether the hunting qualities of hounds have been sacrificed to speed or not, it is certain that in the Heythrop country the tendency has been to breed faster hounds. Philip Payne brought in a change of blood from Cheshire, where the Meynell influence was strong, to improve their legs and feet, but he always insisted on plenty of bone and stamina, with what success is shown by the great feats of endurance recorded in his diary. Nimrod tells us that "with Mr. Warde for his pattern he did not breed his hounds merely with a view to flying over a country on high-scenting mornings, but to stoop to and hunt their foxes over, perhaps, one of the worst scenting countries in England." Will Long is said to have bred the pack finer and faster, and it may be noted as a matter of interest that, with the pace increasing, foxes did not make the same points as they did in the days of his predecessor, though they were good enough. Contemporary sporting literature has described him "as a huntsman as near perfection as may be. To gain his object horsemanship

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is important, and in this he is unrivalled. I invite all lovers of the chase to see him ride one; the finest seat, with such hands as are rarely in use; he rides without jealousy and takes the country as it comes." Jem Hills was, of course, famous as a galloping huntsman, and is said to have gone further than Long in his efforts to breed his hounds for quality and speed.

Another point of contrast between hunting conditions a hundred years ago and to-day is the character of the country. Most of the Enclosure Awards were made during the period that the fifth and sixth Dukes hunted the country; and though there is no means of knowing how soon after the Awards the enclosures were completed, we may safely assume that, whereas at the beginning of this period there were wide expanses of open field—particularly on the hills—at the end of it the enclosures were not very different from what they are to-day. It is true that the huntsman's diaries make no mention of fences or falls, but these side-lines of hunting are very adequately dealt with by Nimrod, who was somewhat contemptuous of the walls, and states that "it is not a bruising country, but that there is one good brook—the Evenlode—which makes the field select." Contemporary evidence of the numbers hunting is contained in an account of a run on the 2nd December, 1827, from a small gorse cover at Swell (probably Pole Hill) by Sezincote, past Bourton-on-the-Hill towards

Wolford Wood. "I never remember," says the author, "a more severe thing in the whole course of my life, the distance from the point of finding to the place where the hounds threw up being nine miles in thirty minutes over a stone wall country. Out of a well-mounted field of from 250 to 300 horsemen there were only two up at the first check."¹ But this remarkable performance appears to have made less impression on Will Long, who merely notes in his diary that "we tried Mr. Pole's gorse and found, went away pretty fast to Sezincote, then came to hunting, and we lost him between Moreton and Bourton-on-the-Hill: came home."

Though in this case we must perhaps accept contemporary figures with grave reservations, it is a fact that besides the fox-hunting residents there were a great many sportsmen who came from other countries to hunt with the Duke, staying at Chapel House and various Inns at Woodstock, Chipping Norton, and elsewhere. It has also been recorded by Nimrod that "no hounds were more over-ridden at one time than the Duke of Beaufort's were."

After Will Long succeeded Philip Payne as huntsman in 1826, the general conditions of sport continued to be much the same, and are recorded by the former in a characteristic, matter-of-fact style in the

¹ *The 8th Duke of Beaufort and the Badminton Hunt*, by T. E. Dale.

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huntsman's book, from which the following are extracted :

1826. *November 6th.* Met at Sandford. Threwed off at a Spinney in the Park ; did not find. Found in Worton Heath, came away to Ledwell, turned back through the lower part of the Heath to Steeple Aston, Rousham, Barton Grove and Moors : back to the Heath, got up to him there, came back fast through Dunstew Gorse to Middle Aston Garden, and killed him. Came home.

1826. *November 17th.* Threwed off at Bruern. Found in Bruern Wood, ran there some length of time, then went away by Idbury to Tangle. Then turned and came through the covers down to Bruern, through there, Churchill Heath, and the Norrells to Sarsgrove : ran in there some time and killed him. Then came home.

1826. *December 15th.* Met at Tangle. Threw off in the Coombes and found. Went away directly, through Barrington Bushes over the said field by Dodds Mill, by Sherborne, to Farmington Grove : got up to him in the gorse below. Came back to Sherborne, turned to Farmington Grove, by the said village, to New Barn and there killed him. Came home. Isaac Day out on the bay mare.

1826. *December 16th.* Met at Ditchley House. Threw off in Temple Wood and found. Ran there some time, and then came away through Henley Knap by Lidstone ; within one field of Chalford Oaks he was headed and turned short back over the road by Chipping Norton Race Course, Chapel House, Carpenter's Gorse, by Choicehill and Salford to Barton Grove, and there the



WILLIAM LONG HUNTSMAN TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT, ON HIS
FAVOURITE HORSE MILKMAN, WITH HOUNDS
From an engraving by Charles Hunt after the painting by J. Ford

THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT AND WILL LONG

Warwickshire hounds killed our fox before we got there. Vaulter got his leg broke.

Two days later, on December 18th, Will Long had a huntsman's triumph, which he records as follows :

1826. *December 18th.* Met at Stockbridge. Threw off at gorse close to Payne's Gorse, did not find. Found at Longborough Leys, went away to Wolford Wood, just touched on it and then went away to Batsford, and then was headed, and then went to Bourton Wood. Ran in Bourton for some time, and part of the hounds went away to Sezincote Warren, and came back to Sir Charles Cockerill's, and there they lost, Jem Hills with them. I stopped at Bourton Wood with seven couple and a half of hounds and killed my fox.

It is interesting to observe that on each of these days only one fox was hunted. Sport continued good until the end of the season, and may be illustrated by the Duke's account of three days in March. He gives a rather more realistic picture than his matter-of-fact huntsman.

1827. *March 9th.* Friday at Adlestrop Turnpike. Found a brace in Oddington Ashes, one a vixen, stopped the hounds from her, and after one turn round the heath went off a great pace to the Upper Ashes, then below Icomb to Gawcombe, to Westcote, over the open field and road to Westcote Heath, so to Tangle, Taynton Quarries and village : checked there. At length got on the scent again and ran back to the Quarries, over the

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valley and back again, and killed him in the middle of a field, a very good run.

March 19th. Monday. Eyford. Snow and sleet in the morning. Threw off soon after eleven o'clock. Chopped a fox in the Gorse. Got upon another in the Ash Bed : ran him to the kitchen garden, and killed him with three legs. Caught view of a fox at the Gorse on the hill, ran to Swell : checked and turned to the right, ran nearly to Broadwell and lost. Found the vixen in Oddington Ashes : stopped the hounds from that, and got on another fox that went by Daylesford House, Adlestrop Hill, Harcombs, nearly to Evenlode : then right over to Donnington Gorse, Broadwell village, Stow, where we checked, but hunted to the Swell Spinnies where we gave it up, soon after we checked. In a few minutes saw the fox coming towards us, but let him alone and came home at twenty-five minutes past seven o'clock.

March 21st. Wednesday. Boulters Barn. Found in Kingham Furse, went off to Chastleton Hill, Adlestrop Hill, and in a ring back to the top of the gorse : then to Cornwell, where the fox was headed and we checked. Hunted the fox after a few minutes through Kingham Gorse to Sarsgrove : went instantly to Chadlington Wood, all through that to beyond Pudlicote House, back through the wood, over the water to the Forest, and caught the fox very handsomely close to Waterman's Lodge, just two hours in all and a very great pace from Sarsgrove.

The record of three consecutive days' hunting in March, 1828, may also be given :

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1828. *March 26th.* Wednesday. Spelsbury. Found in Green Hill Gorse : went through Chadlington Wood, Lyneham Heath, then over the brook between that village and Kingham, over Kingham field by the gorse and Cornwell and within a field or so of Larges on the Hill : then short back above Swailsford Bridge, and almost to Boulter's Barn : then back by Kingham Gorse to Adlestrop Hill, where I think we changed, and ran to the Harcombs and back to the Hill and Mr. Hasting's and at last killed on the Hill, about two hours and twenty-one minutes—a very good day's sport.

March 28. Friday. Stockbridge. Tried Longborough, etc., without finding. Found at length two in Oddington Ashes : went away to within a mile of Stow, then turned to the left over the valley to Wyck, down to Stow Bridge, just skirted Slaughter Coppice, up the ridge of hill above Eyford, and killed in the Fir Clump between Pole's Gorse and the farther end of Eyford. One hour and four minutes and a *very* good pace all the time, a very brilliant thing.

March 29th. Saturday. Ditchley House. Found in Temple Wood, ran there and Lee's Rest, Oak Ridings, etc., etc., and lost. Found in King's Wood and came back and did the same, and had a check in Oak Ridings : at last pushed the fox away to Lee's Rest, Fawler Stone Quarries, the Coppice at Stonesfield, and killed just beyond Northleigh. Went a good pace and it was well done.

The general impression gained from a perusal of these diaries is that fox-hunting in the Duke's Oxfordshire country a hundred years ago must have

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been a very exacting sport, involving what we should consider great feats of endurance by man and beast. The actual mileage ridden in four days' hunting every week, each of which usually covered a big tract of country, must have been remarkable, and it is difficult to see how carriages or covert hacks would have given much assistance—at any rate neither of them are mentioned. The modern problem of "where to have the car" at the end of the day would have presented unusual difficulties then. The sport was rigorously pursued. On a frosty or foggy morning hounds remained at the meet until the afternoon—on one foggy November day they waited in the Ditchley woods and threw off at three o'clock. The expression "stopped hounds as it was dusk" frequently occurs. Yet it appears that neither the Duke nor his hunt servants ever had a second horse out. The account of a good hunt often concludes with the note that many horses were tired—and on one remarkable occasion that "some died."

Fox-hunting was a serious business and our ancestors had fewer distractions than we have. They took as a matter of course a long hack to the meet, often followed by what we should consider a draw of interminable length. But once a fox was found they were far more certain of a hunt than we are to-day. The Duke and his huntsman frequently complain that scent was bad, but apparently this did not prevent them from hunting their foxes,

and they "came up with them" sooner or later. It is interesting to see that they had some of their best sport in March—now regarded as a particularly bad scenting month in the Heythrop country—and the Duke writes of several good hunts when "the dust was flying on every plough." The earth-stopping was good—and incidentally cost more than it does to-day—but they had their difficulties to contend with : hares "made a confusion," and foxes were frequently headed by people working in the "open fields." Will Long generally killed his forty brace of foxes in the season, and they were killed right through the season—only about fifteen brace would be killed before the 1st of November ; most of the rest were killed above ground, and very few were chopped. It is interesting to recall that the eighteenth Lord Willoughby de Broke used to kill about the same number, hunting four days a week, in what is perhaps the most famous period of the Warwickshire Hunt. In the Duke's last season in Oxfordshire (1834-5) his hounds hunted one hundred and nine days, of which four were blank. They killed 9 brace before they left Badminton on the 22nd September, and another $6\frac{1}{2}$ brace in Oxfordshire before the 1st November. After that date they killed 9 brace in Oxfordshire before the end of January, $8\frac{1}{2}$ brace at Badminton in February, and $12\frac{1}{2}$ brace in Oxfordshire from the 4th of March to the 25th of April : total $45\frac{1}{2}$ brace.

Will Long also kept a personal diary, in which he

noted various matters of general interest. After the hunting season he visited other famous kennels, and has recorded his opinion of Lord Yarborough's hounds: "They are of a very small size with pretty good legs and feet, rather heavy in their shoulders, but good and light in their necks: long in their carcasses and rather flat-sided. I suppose a very stout sort of hound." The Quorn he found "quite as clever as I expected." At the Duke of Rutland's he saw "a clever pack of hounds, the most like our own of any I saw. I think we might average the bone of ours and theirs, but I think taking them altogether we have the best legs and feet. I measured their bone and brought it and measured ours, and could find no difference." He was subsequently shown Lord Fitzwilliam's hounds at Milton by his huntsman, the well-known Sebright, "and a very fine bony pack they were. I think too large a hound for Oxfordshire, in short larger than I should like them for any country. Sebright seems to be partial to a large hound; he told me this country required they should be such—to make use of his words—as they have a great deal of black-thorn and briar in their country. Now my opinion is that the smaller hounds would get through coverts of that sort better than the larger ones, and for this reason, as they would get under it easier, and it is impossible that the large ones can break all before them that comes in their way." He states that "Mr. Osbaldeston's hounds are very much talked

of, but in my opinion not particularly clever. The pack consists chiefly of bitches ; they, I suppose, are a pretty show pack in the field, but small, not quite good legs and feet taking them altogether, but Mr. Osbaldeston is not particular about that ; all he wants of them is to go." He noted that "Furrier is a bad legged one." At the Duke of Grafton's kennel he "was very much disappointed in the hounds, both to shape and condition ; they were looking very bad in their skins, and I did not think them by any means a clever pack, but very few stallions for so long an established pack ; slight of bone and not very good legs and feet. I have many times heard of these hounds being lame, and now I was convinced." It will be discerned that Long was a man of independent views.

In a subsequent season the great Squire Osbaldeston visited the Oxfordshire country. Long wrote that "Mr. Osbaldeston hunted with us. The hunt was at Bourton Bridge, we had a very hard day and he tired the nag. He was mounted by Mr. Evans of Dean, it was the first time I saw him. Wm. Grace of Charlbury rode very foul at the hounds at a fence, and had it not been for Mr. Osbaldeston would have ridden over them, and I think he richly deserved what Mr. Osbaldeston talked of giving him, which was a flogging." It is perhaps fortunate for our peace of mind that to-day a visiting M.F.H. is usually a man of milder metal than "the Squire."

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No doubt Long's appreciation of "the Squire" as a hard man owed something to the fact that he was an uncommonly hard man himself. His own record of hours in the saddle must have been remarkable, and apparently time and distance meant nothing to him. His diary tells us that on the 12th March, 1830, "I went to Badminton after hunting. We met at Chapel House and had a very good day's sport before I went, and killed a leash of foxes. I left Heythrop at 3.20 in the afternoon and got home 9.30 same evening. I rode my own little bay mare to Bourton-on-the-Water, where I had sent White Stockings, which I rode to Badminton, and left there on Monday morning at 5.30, and met the hounds to hunt, which I did, and was at Mr. Dolphin's (Eyford) a little before 10 o'clock." The distance from Heythrop to Badminton by road is the best part of fifty miles—a good enough point after a day's hunting. A few years later he notes that "on 28th March I was taken ill with the scarlet fever, hunted on the Monday, but did not hunt again till that day fortnight"—a quick convalescence.

His diary also mentions certain interesting episodes in the popular agitation connected with the Reform Bill of 1832 and agrarian troubles. Thus, in 1830, "this winter there were in many parts of the country very great disturbances by great assemblages of mobs who destroyed a great deal of machinery, particularly threshing machines. They went to

Chalford farm on the evening of 27th November and beat Mr. Matthews' machine to pieces, from there to Mr. Gardner of Broadstone Hill and beat his to pieces, then to Mr. Harris of Dunthorpe and did likewise, then came to the Roman Chapel waggon house, fetched a hay-making machine out, brought it to the front of Heythrop House and broke it to pieces. Afterwards came to Heythrop Hall and demanded victuals and beer, but did not get any. As many as would almost fill the hall went in. The Duke, Lord Worcester, Lord Granville, Lord John and Lord Edward Somerset went to them, and they very soon left. One of them, who was called the King, and whose name I believe was Hollis of Sandford, loitered and had something more to say, was detained by the Marquis of Worcester, and sent to Oxford Castle on the morrow, taken there by Henry Cross and E. Gardner the constable." In the following year there was "great riot at Derby, and Nottingham Castle burnt down, the riot lasted three days." As Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and High Steward of Bristol, the Duke himself was involved in the famous Bristol riots, when the diary mentions that "the Bristol rioters were tried by Special Commission; five of them sentenced to be hanged but one was respited; his name was Vines." It was no doubt owing to the disturbed times that a tradition grew up later that the fire which destroyed Heythrop was an act of incendiarism, but this gets no confirmation from

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Long. He merely records that "on Thursday morning (24th Feb., 1831) a little before five o'clock Heythrop House was discovered to be on fire, which burnt very furiously. The whole of the interior of the house was burnt out before 8.30 same morning. It caught fire in a small room where two beds were put to air, whether the beds caught fire, or a coal tumbled out on the floor, is not certain." Whatever the explanation the house was gutted, and remained a ruin—in which a fox has been found within living memory—until it was rebuilt by Mr. Albert Brassey in the early seventies. The Duke changed his hunting quarters, first to the Inn at Chapel House, and afterwards to Rangers Lodge, from which he hunted for four more seasons. But in 1835, after more than thirty years' Mastership, he intimated that he could no longer hunt the Oxfordshire country. Will Long notes in his diary for April 25th "the last day of hunting in Oxfordshire and a blank day, the Oxfordshire country to be hunted by a sort of Committee. We spared them 25 couple of old hounds and five couple of young unentered ones. The price for all was £400: Mr. Tattersall put the price at £450, the Duke took off £50." This was the last service that he rendered to the Heythrop country, for he died at Badminton in the following November.

CHAPTER III

LORD REDESDALE'S MASTERSHIP

THE destinies of the new Hunt, henceforth to be known as the Heythrop, were now entrusted to a few of the landowners and residents in the part of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire hitherto hunted by the Duke of Beaufort. A Hunt could not, of course, rely on any general local support as it is understood to-day. In constitution it was oligarchic rather than democratic. As in many other parts of England, a single wealthy individual had provided sport for his neighbours, which had cost them nothing : this responsibility was now to be shared by such of the resident gentry as were in a position to undertake it. Amongst these were Lord Redesdale of Batsford, Mr. James Langston of Sarsden, and Mr. Webb of Kiddington, who became a Committee of management. Their principal supporters were Sir Charles Cockerill of Sezincote, Sir John Cathcart of Adlestrop, Lord Churchill of Cornbury Park, Lord Clonbrock, who lived at Rangers Lodge, Lord Dillon of Ditchley, Mr. Dormer of Rousham, Mr. Mostyn, Mr. Parker of Eynsham Hall, Mr. Pole of Todenham, and Mr. Waller of Farmington. The total number of subscribers was only about thirty.

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It was therefore no light task to replace the ducal establishment and carry on the new country. In addition to the ordinary expenses of maintaining a pack of hounds, the Duke had paid £300 a year for earth-stopping, besides the rents for several gorse coverts; venison from Badminton was sent to the farmers every summer, and other contingent expenses had been liberally met. But his successors started with certain valuable assets. Between them they owned no inconsiderable part of the country to be hunted, and they could count on the support of other non-hunting landowners. They took over the kennels at Heythrop, and formed their pack with twenty couple of old hounds from the Duke, thirteen couple from Lord Radnor, nine couple from the Warwickshire, and three couple from Mr. Moreton. Besides this they had five couple of unentered hounds from the Duke, five couple from Mr. Drake, and six couple from Mr. Moreton. They engaged as their huntsman Jem Hills, who had been first whip to the V.W.H. for the past five seasons, and prior to that had been second whip to Will Long. He was soon to prove himself a huntsman of exceptional ability.

But despite these advantages the early history of the young Hunt resolved itself into a stern struggle, or rather a series of struggles, to maintain a separate existence. Evidences of this are to be found in the Minute Book of the earliest meetings of the members of the Hunt, which records, in the copperplate

handwriting and somewhat formal phraseology affected by our ancestors, how certain members of the local nobility and gentry were summoned to a meeting at the White Hart Inn, Chipping Norton, on 22nd February, 1837, when "Lord Churchill was called to the chair. The meeting accepted Mr. Langston's offer to undertake the management of the hounds for the Committee, receiving £1,000 for the year, the Committee undertaking to pay the earth-stopping, the rent of upholding the coverts, and the rent of the Kennels at Heythrop." On the 19th December, 1838, Mr. Langston having announced that he wished to discontinue his management of the hounds at the close of the season, the members were once more summoned to the White Hart Inn, to determine what steps should be taken to secure the country an efficient establishment for the future. The Committee was then empowered "to offer £1,000, independent of earth-stopping and rent of the Kennels and coverts, to any gentleman who will hunt the country four days a week; and this announcement was inserted in the public papers." But, as no such gentleman responded, the members fell back on local talent, and Mr. Parker of Eynsham Hall, afterwards Lord Macclesfield, agreed to take Mr. Langston's place. On his retirement early in the season, in consequence of the tragic death of his wife after a riding accident, the members had once more to consider the question of mastership, and agreed that "Lord Clonbrock

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should undertake direction of the hounds during Mr. Parker's absence, and to submit to a percentage of their subscriptions, as it appeared that the subscriptions would be inadequate to meet all the expenses of the season." At a meeting held on 7th January, 1840, it was resolved that "it is expedient to continue the hounds under the present management for another year, and that, in the event of there not being sufficient money collected from subscriptions to cover the expenses, and no means of carrying on the Hunt beyond the next year being offered, the deficiency be made good from the produce of the sale of the hounds." A proposal to reduce the hunting days to three a week, in the interests of economy, was also considered. But apparently the budget remained unbalanced, and a members' meeting held on 11th November, 1841, "came to the resolution that the hounds must be given up immediately, unless further means can be provided."

The Hunt was preserved from this untimely fate mainly by the personality of Lord Redesdale, who became Master in 1842 and continued in office for twelve seasons. John Thomas Freeman Mitford, son of the first Lord Redesdale, was born in 1805 ; at Eton he was in Sixth Form and had Mr. Gladstone as his page at Montem, when the latter was a lower boy. He took his degree at New College, Oxford, and succeeded his father when he was twenty-five, but took no part in the House of Lords debates

until 1837, when he interested himself in the details and procedure of parliamentary bills. His industry and business capacity were appreciated; the Duke of Wellington appointed him to be his whip, and encouraged him to make a special study of the private business of the House. But he contrived to combine his parliamentary duties with those of a good Gloucestershire landlord. He was devoted to his home at Batsford Park, where he kept house with his sister (he never married) and took the closest interest in local affairs, rarely missing the sittings of the Board of Guardians at Shipston. He was a keen sportsman, a good shot, and fortunately for the Heythrop country a true fox-hunter. On assuming the mastership, he handled the unstable finances of the Hunt with characteristic firmness and common sense. He took office with a guarantee of £1,500, and stipulated that the income and expenditure of the Hunt must be balanced. After his first season he offered "to contribute £100 towards this desirable settlement, taking £1,400 instead of £1,500," but declined "to make this additional sacrifice except to secure a prospect of permanency." This policy he maintained. He presently reduced the guarantee to £1,300, and eventually to £1,200, accepted promises to subscribe as the equivalent to cash (though, as he pointed out, these seldom proved to be identical) and met other expenses personally—but always on the understanding that the income of the Hunt must cover its expenditure.

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

Whenever it appeared that this principle was endangered, he stiffened the efforts of his supporters by threats of resignation and offers of further help. The members assembled, duly apprised of the "imminent danger of his lordship's resignation," assured him of "their perfect satisfaction with the liberal and efficient way in which he had hunted the country," and braced themselves for further efforts. A special Covert Fund was started, and an annual income in the region of £1,500 proved adequate to meet the expenditure, when suitably reduced by the generosity of the Master. It is interesting to observe that, though rents were then paid for some of the coverts, the payments on account of claims for poultry were insignificant, an indication of the prosperous condition of the farmers.

From time to time the Hunt was confronted by other problems. Captain Evans of Dean, one of Nimrod's celebrities and well known in Leicestershire as "the Flying Captain" as a tribute to his quickness over a country, kept a pack of harriers near Eynsham. Tradition says that these were turned to him by his daughter and his retriever, and were so small that one could hardly see them in a root field; but the Captain "engaged to kill a hare with any three of them." However, Lord Redesdale had occasion to call the attention of a Hunt meeting to the injury which the country had sustained on several occasions by the disturbance of coverts occasioned by Captain Evans's harriers, and

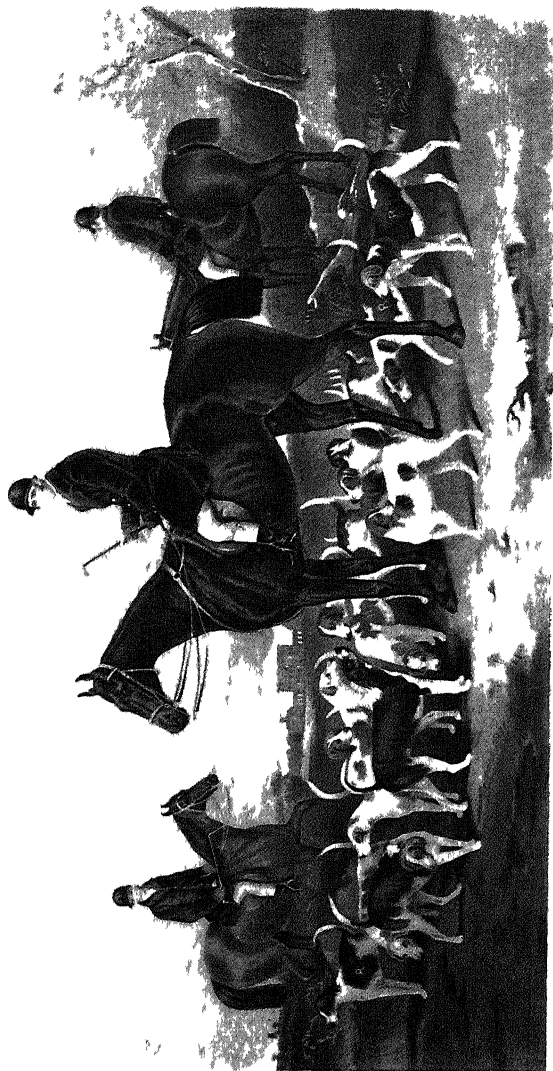
after fully considering the subject "the meeting was unanimously of opinion that great injury had been done to their sport, and requested Lord Redesdale to communicate with Captain Evans on the subject, stating to him that their country had never been considered capable of admitting the regular hunting of a pack of harriers over the whole of it, as well as a pack of fox-hounds—and representing to him the inconvenience which had arisen from the manner in which he had hunted it."

Equal firmness was displayed by Lord Redesdale in a dispute which arose with the Old Berks Hunt as to the boundaries of the neutral country south of the Oxford-Witney road. He concluded a long and somewhat formal correspondence by explaining that "we all know by experience how difficult it is after the lapse of a few years to say positively when we first heard a report, and thus an idea appears to have grown up at length among some of the Berkshire gentlemen that this was the ancient boundary. The Duke of Beaufort's evidence, however, sets the question at rest, and remains after several meetings of your Hunt on the subject up to this time not only uncontradicted but confirmed by strong corroborative proof."

It may perhaps be said that in the Heythrop country the march of progress is slow, and almost unobserved. It remained curiously untouched by the industrial revolution of the last century, but in the early 'forties there appeared what was regarded

as a grave menace to fox-hunting, proposals to construct a railway through the country. Lord Redesdale promptly resigned. However, he was presently able to announce to his subscribers that "as none of the works of the contemplated railway were commenced or likely to be commenced at present, he had no objection to continuing the hounds for one more season."

Meantime the sport shown had been all that could be desired, and Jem Hills and his hounds had become celebrated. Having started with good material to work on, as soon as the conditions permitted, Hills set himself to breed the right hound for the country, and to rely on his own sort without resorting to drafts. For fresh blood he sent principally to the kennels of Lord Yarborough, Lord Fitzhardinge, and Mr. Drake. He was one of the first to send to the Warwickshire Tarquin, whose work he had observed on the scentless ploughs above Rollright. The first essential for hounds hunting the cold-scenting hills of the Heythrop country was nose and working qualities; once these were assured, he could correct size and shape by judicious mating. In this way he bred up a pack of the old Badminton type, though with rather less substance: they were described as "wiry, active sort of hounds, proverbially stout, with very great speed, admirably adapted to the country in which they hunted." There, it has been the accepted theory that it is all important for hounds



JAMES HILL'S HUNSMAN JOHN GODDARD AND THOMAS STATTER WITH SOME
OF THE FAVOURITE HOUNDS OF LORD RIDDELL'S PACK

Engraving by W. H. Simmons, after the painting by J. C. Ad

to keep close to their fox, and with the right sort of hounds for his purpose Jem Hills saw to it that no time was lost. His methods became notorious. Contemporary evidence is afforded by an article in *Baily's Magazine* of January, 1871. The particular Pomponius Ego to whom this was entrusted pays a generous tribute to the skill of Jem Hills and his first whip, Jack Goddard. "No day," he affirms, "was too long for Lord Redesdale or Jem Hills. As I told you before the Heythrop is a cold-scenting country, but Jem Hills was by far the quickest huntsman I have ever seen. He knew the run of every fox, and he lifted his hounds in a way that no other man ever did or ever could; for strange to say, after galloping with them for a mile as hard as they could go, they could stop and get their heads down as if nothing had happened. Jem had many imitators, but I never knew anybody who could do that trick and work the telegraph like him."

By none were the Jem Hills methods more appreciated than by the Oxford undergraduates, who subscribed to have his portrait painted, and presented him with the original of the print which has been reproduced. The admiration was mutual: Hills liked his field to go, and in this respect the undergraduates of the day left nothing to be desired. "Bless 'em," he said, "they fears nothing, because they knows nothing."

The famous Tar Wood run took place on Christmas Eve, 1845. It started in the neutral country,

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

and continued through the territories of the Old Berks and V.W.H. The *History of the Old Berks Hunt* contains an account written by Mr. Lenthall of Besselsleigh who saw the hunt, which confirms the historical accuracy of Mr. Egerton-Warburton's poem in almost every detail. There was a very white frost in the morning with a bright sun. The fox crossed the Windrush, near Cokethorpe, and pointed for the Barley Park coverts, where he was headed, and made a half-circle south by Cote, Aston, and Bampton. Thence he ran nearly straight over the Thames valley meadows, strongly fenced with deep ditches, and reached the river just below Lechlade, where he was viewed. Shortly afterwards he ran past the V.W.H. Hunt, which had met at Lechlade on the same morning. He then turned north-west, and was killed in the open when pointing for Fairford Park. The point was seventeen miles, the distance anything over twenty, and the pace quite good enough for the few survivors. It was always thought that this stout fox and two others, which had provided the Old Berks with great hunts in the preceding year, came from the same litter, bred in Tar Wood.

LORD REDESDALE'S MASTERSHIP
TARWOOD

A RUN WITH THE HEYTHROP

By R. E. EGERTON-WARBURTON

He waited not—he was not found—
No warning note from eager hound,
But echo of the distant horn,
From outskirts of the covert borne,
Where Jack the Whip in ambush lay,
Proclaim'd that he was gone away.

Away! ere yet that blast was blown,
The fox had o'er the meadow flown;
Away! away! his flight he took,
Straight pointing for the Windrush brook!

The Miller, when he heard the pack,
Stood tiptoe on his loaded sack,
He view'd the fox across the flat,
And, needless signal, waved his hat;
He saw him clear with easy stride
The stream by which the mill was plied;
Like phantom fox he seem'd to fly,
With speed unearthly flitting by.

The road that leads to Witney town
He travell'd neither up nor down;
But straight away, like arrow sped
From cloth yard bow, he shot a-head.
Now Cokethorpe on his left he past,
Now Ducklington behind him cast,
Now by Bampton, now by Lew,
Now by Clanfield, on he flew;
At Grafton now his course inclined,
And Kelmscote now is left behind!

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

Where waters of the Isis lave
The meadows with their classic wave,
O'er those wide meadows speeding on,
He near'd the bridgeway of St. John;
He paused a moment on the bank,
His footsteps in the ripple sank,
He felt how cold, he saw how strong
The rapid river roll'd along;
Then turn'd away, as if to say,
"All those who like to cross it may."

The Huntsman, though he view'd him back,
View'd him too late to turn the pack,
Which o'er the tainted meadow prest,
And reach'd the river all abreast;
In with one plunge, one billowy splash,
In—together—in they dash,
Together stem the wintry tide,
Then shake themselves on t'other side!
"Hark, hollo back!" that loud halloo
Then eager, and more eager grew,
Till every hound, recrossing o'er,
Stoop'd forward to the scent once more;
Nor further aid, throughout the day,
From Huntsman or from Whip had they.

Away! away! uncheck'd in pace,
O'er grass and fallow swept the chace;
To hounds, to horses, or to men,
No child's play was the struggle then;
A trespasser on Milward's ground,
He climb'd the pale that fenced it round;
Then close by Little Hemel sped,
To Fairford pointing straight a-head,
Though now, the pack approaching nigh,

LORD REDESDALE'S MASTERSHIP

He heard his death-note in the cry ;
They view'd him, and now seem'd their race,
The very lightning of the chace !
The fox had reach'd the Southropp lane,
He strove to cross it, but in vain,
The pack roll'd o'er him in his stride,
And onward struggling still—he died.

This gallant fox, in Tarwood found,
Had cross'd full twenty miles of ground ;
Had sought in cover, left or right,
No shelter to conceal his flight ;
But nigh two hours the open kept,
As stout a fox as ever stept !
That morning, in the saddle set,
A hundred men at Tarwood met ;
The eager steeds which they bestrode
Paced, to and fro, the Witney road,
For hard as iron shoe that trod
Its surface, the unyielding sod ;
They champ'd the bit and twitch'd the rein,
And paw'd the frozen earth in vain ;
Impatient with fleet hoof to scour
The vale, each minute seem'd an hour,
Till mid-day sun had made the ground
Fit treading for the foot of hound ;
Still Rumour says of that array
Scarce ten lived fairly through the day.

Ah ! how shall I in song declare
The riders who were foremost there ?
A fit excuse how shall I find
For every rider left behind ?

Though Cokethorpe seem one open plain,
'Tis slash'd and sluiced with many a drain,

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

And he who clears those ditches wide
Must needs a goodly steed bestride.
From Bampton to the river's bounds
The race was run o'er pasture grounds ;
Yet many a horse of blood and bone
Was heard to cross it with a groan ;
For blackthorns stiff the fields divide
With watery ditch on either side.
By Lechlade's village fences rise
Of every sort and every size,
And frequent there the grievous fall
O'er slippery bank and crumbling wall ;
Some planted deep in cornfield stand,
A fix'd incumbrance on the land !
While others prove o'er post and rail
The merits of the sliding scale.

Ah ! much it grieves the Muse to tell
At Clanfield how Valentia fell ;
He went, they say, like one bewitch'd,
Till headlong from the saddle pitch'd ;
There, reckless of the pain, he sigh'd
To think he might not onward ride ;
Though fallen from his pride of place,
His heart was following still the chace ;
He bade his many friends forbear
The proffer'd aid, nor tarry there ;
" Oh ! heed me not, but ride away !
The Tarwood fox must die to-day ! "

Nor fell Valentia there alone,
There too in mid career was thrown
The Huntsman—in the breastplate swung
His heels—his body earthward hung ;

LORD REDESDALE'S MASTERSHIP

With many a tug at neck and mane,
Struggling he reach'd his seat again;
Once more upon the back of Spangle,
His head and heels at proper angle,
(Poor Spangle in a piteous plight),
He look'd around him, bolt upright,
Nor near nor far could succour see,—
Where can the faithless Juliet be?
He would have given half his wage
Just then to see her on the stage;
The pack those meads by Isis bound
Had reach'd ere Jem his Juliet found;
Well thence with such a prompter's aid,
Till Reynard's death her part she play'd.

There Isaac from the chase withdrew,
(A horse is Isaac, not a Jew),
Outstretch'd his legs, and shook his back,
Right glad to be relieved of Jack;
And Jack, right glad his back to quit,
Gave Beatrice a benefit.

Moisture and mud the "Fungus" suit,
In boggy ditch he, taking root,
For minutes ten or there about,
Stood planted, till they pluck'd him out.
By application of spur rowel
Charles rubb'd him dry without a towel.

Say, as the pack by Kelmscote sped,
Say who those horsemen cloath'd in red?
Spectators of the chase below,
Themselves no sign of movement show;
Now wonder—they were all aghast
To see the pace at which it past;

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

The "White Horse Vale"—well known to Fame
The pack to which it gives a name ;
And there they stood as if spell bound,
Their morning fox as yet unfound ;
Borne from that wood, their Huntsman's cheer
Drew many a Tarwood straggler near,
And he who felt the pace too hot,
There gladly sought a resting spot ;
Himself of that White Horse availing,
When conscious that his own was failing.

Thus ships, when they no more can bide
The fury of the wind and tide,
If chance some tranquil port they spy,
Where vessels safely shelter'd lie,
There seek a refuge from the gale,
Cast anchor, and let down the sail.

The speed of horse, the pluck of man,
They needed both, who led the van ;
This Holmes can tell, who through the day
Was ever foremost in the fray ;
And Holloway, with best intent,
Still shivering timber as he went ;
And Williams, clinging to the pack
As if the League were at his back ;
And Tollit, ready still to sell
The nag that carried him so well.

A pretty sight at first to see
Young Pretymán on Modesty !
But Pretymán went on so fast,
That Modesty took fright at last ;
So bent was she to shun disgrace,
That in the brook she hid her face ;

LORD REDESDALE'S MASTERSHIP

So bashful, that to drag her out
They fetch'd a team and tackle stout.

When younger men of lighter weight
Some tale of future sport relate,
Let Whippy show the brush he won,
And tell them of the Tarwood run ;
While Rival's portrait, on the wall,
Shall oft to memory recall
The gallant fox, the burning scent,
The leaps they leapt, the pace they went ;
How *Whimsey* led the pack at first ;
When Reynard from the woodside burst,
How *Pamela*, a puppy hound,
First seized him, struggling on the ground ;
How *Prudence* shunn'd the taint of hare,
Taught young in life to have a care ;
How *Alderman*, a foxhound staunch,
Work'd well upon an empty paunch ;
How Squires were, following thee, upset,
Right honourable *Baronet* ;
How, as the pack by Lechdale flew,
Where close and thick the fences grew,
Three Bitches led the tuneful throng,
All worthy of a place in song ;
Old *Fairplay*, ne'er at skirting caught,
And *Pensive* speeding quick as thought ;
While *Handsome* proved the adage true,
They handsome are that handsome do !

Then long may courteous Redesdale live !
And oft his pack such gallops give !
Should fox again so stoutly run,
May I be there and see the fun !

1845.

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

Throughout this period of its history the foundation of the Hunt consisted of the resident landowners and their connections. Besides Lord Redesdale, Sir Charles Rushout (formerly Cockerill) of Sezincote, Mr. Whitmore Jones of Chastleton, and Lord Leigh owned estates on the north side of the country. Mr. H. Waller of Farmington on the west side, and on the east Mr. H. Hall of Barton Abbey, Mr. Cotterell-Dormer of Rousham, Mr. Ricardo of Kiddington, and Mr. Henry Barnett of Glympton Park were staunch supporters. In the centre were Mr. Davies of Swerford Park, Lord Dillon, Mr. Langston of Sarsden, and Lord Churchill of Cornbury.

Lord Dillon, the fourteenth Viscount, was something of a celebrity, whose eccentricities provided material for several good stories, which may or may not have been founded on fact. He was devoted to music and kept a private choir, which sang in the chapel at Ditchley and was then galloped off in a waggonette for the service at Spelsbury. One of his chief pleasures was to show his friends the delightful prospect from the roof of the house. He is said on one occasion to have tried the effect of this on a pig, and to have kicked the animal into space because it showed no signs of appreciation. He was an enthusiastic fox-hunter, and when hounds met at Ditchley his practice was to have his keepers assembled in green and gold liveries on the steps of the porch, as he walked down to mount his hunter

whom he had named Angelo (a celebrated fencer of this period) as a tribute to his performances.

His neighbour, "Squire" Langston of Sarsden, was the son of John Langston, a London banker, who had purchased and added to the Sarsden estates, which comprised at this time some 6,000 acres and extended from Milton-under-Wychwood nearly to Chipping Norton. The Squire was a zealous agriculturist, with the means to give practical effect to his theories, and devoted his life to the improvement of his property. Most of the substantial farmhouses and buildings in the neighbourhood, besides the church at Churchill and the Langston Arms Inn, are enduring monuments to his activities—built almost entirely of stone from his own quarries, or of bricks baked in his own kiln. He kept two sets of steam plough tackle for the use of his tenants, and insisted on a high standard of farming. He twice represented Oxford City in the House of Commons, and was an honorary D.C.L. of the University. The Langston Arms, still the most favoured meet in the Heythrop country, is perhaps the best-known memorial of a great landlord and a great fox-hunter.

General Lygon and his nephew, Sir Charles Kent, 1st Life Guards, hunted from Spring Hill: the latter kept his horses at Stow, was a fine horseman, and reputed to have been the first of the field to have a second horse out. Colonel Foley, a Grenadier, who was a brother-in-law of Sir Charles

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

Rushout, hunted from Sezincote. Mr. Charles Lindow was at Gawcombe: he was a son of the famous Meltonian described by Nimrod, and depicted in contemporary art as "going a slapping pace." His uncle, Mr. Rawlinson, lived at Chadlington, and owned Coronation, winner of the Derby in 1841 and trained by his stud groom in Heythrop Park. Among the hard riders was Captain Anstice, who had formerly hunted with the Duke from the old Inn at Chapel House. Another was Mr. W. Chafey, who rode a favourite horse called "Little Wonder," and would often holloa out in the crisis of a hunt: "Five pounds on his brush, Jem, if you kill him." On one occasion he pounded the whole field over the brook near Wykham Park (no mean obstacle) when the owner shouted out: "Shut the drawing-room window: Chafey is over the brook and he'll be in there next." This hero was also a statistician. His diary, most accurately kept, enabled him to assert that between 1849 and 1869 he went out 3,079 days, saw 1,274 foxes killed, 613 run to ground, 440 hares killed, 45 stags taken—and he estimated that he had ridden to meet and with hounds 115,875 miles. Suitable comment on this performance could only be made by Dr. Johnson to whom the observation is attributed "that it is a strange and perhaps a melancholy reflection that the paucity of our amusements compels us to include fox-hunting among them." Another hard rider was Mr. Holloway of Charlbury, who "rode to sell."

LORD REDESDALE'S MASTERSHIP

His uncle Mr. Whippy, the well-known saddler, owned Lee Place and was a substantial supporter of the Hunt for many years : we are told that on his death a provision in his will required that any members of the Hunt who owed his firm money should have their accounts returned to them receipted. Baily's faithful correspondent supplies us, in accordance with the custom of the times, with the appropriate achievements attached to more heroic names : there was Mr. Vavasour, " one of the best, specially on Lazarus," Major Bowles of North Aston, " who made a rare fight on a moderate horse," Major Bowyer, " who had a neat stud " and many others. Such are the legends of the period.

The Church has always been well represented in the Heythrop field, and among the earliest exponents were Mr. Barter of Sarsden, Mr. Wynter of Daylesford, Mr. Lewis of Taynton, and Mr. Van Notten Pole of Swell.

In 1851 Lord Redesdale was chosen to succeed Lord Shaftesbury as Chairman of Committees in the House of Lords. This presently involved his resignation of the Mastership, but opened a wider field of action for which he was specially qualified. He held the appointment until his death, and acted as Speaker of the House in the absence of the Lord Chancellor. His shrewdness and independence of judgment, and above all the untiring industry with which he mastered all the intricacies of private bill legislation, enabled him to increase the authority and

prestige of the House of Lords in connection with private business. His own authority was unquestioned—he was known as the Lord Dictator—and even the critics of the innate conservatism with which he approached every question, and his somewhat autocratic methods, were bound to acknowledge his single-minded honesty and high sense of public duty. He is said always to have treated the promoters of railway bills and the chairmen and directors of railway companies with special suspicion and severity, and even threatened to summon a certain contractor to the bar of the House for remarks reflecting on him as Chairman. This was merely the acknowledged expression of his concern for the interests of the shareholders and the public, but perhaps his old friends in Gloucestershire might have discerned in it something of the inveterate mistrust of the nineteenth-century fox-hunter for the railways and everything connected with them.

In the Heythrop country his authority never waned. On his resignation the Committee placed on record their recognition of the liberal and efficient manner in which he had hunted the country for so many years, and of the kind and generous support with which he had come forward to enable them to carry on the Hunt. To this end he had devoted every moment that could be spared from his parliamentary duties, and spent his money generously. He had improved the country from a

fox-hunting point of view—it is always said that he bought the Swinbrook property mainly to secure the coverts of Stockley, Widley, and Hens Grove for the Hunt—and both Redesdale Gorse and Icomb Cowpastures supplied new fox coverts in places where they were most required. To the end of his life—and he lived to be eighty-two—he was always concerned with the welfare of the Hunt, and could be counted on for advice and assistance in every difficulty that arose. In the Heythrop country there are still a few people who can recall a slim and very kindly old gentleman, possessed of great shrewdness and a dry humour, who always adhered to the blue tail-coat with brass buttons of an earlier period of fashion, and disdained the protection of an overcoat. The admirable train service to Moreton-in-Marsh serves to remind the present generation of his firm treatment of railway companies, and when a good fox leaves Icomb Cowpastures for the Gawcombe Vale, it is well to remember that Lord Redesdale made it a fox-covert, and that it is still held for this purpose by a member of his family.

CHAPTER IV

MR. HALL'S MASTERSHIP

THE Hunt Minute Book records that when he resigned the Mastership in 1854 Lord Redesdale made "the following most liberal proposition : he will lend the hounds and stable of horses, under certain conditions, to the Committee, and he offers a subscription of £400 towards the necessary expenses, and to be responsible for any deficiency that may exist at the end of next season, in the rateable proportion of his subscription to that of the other members of the Hunt." The hounds remained the property of Lord Redesdale until they were purchased by Mr. Albert Brassey : Lord Redesdale then invested the purchase money in the name of Trustees for the Hunt, to enable it to repurchase the pack for the country at some future date.

No offer having been received from any other person to take the country, a Committee was formed to carry on the Hunt, consisting of Mr. Barnett of Glympton Park, Mr. Bowyer of Middle Aston, Mr. Henry Hall of Barton, Mr. Ricardo of Kidding-ton, and Mr. Waller of Farmington. Mr. Henry Hall undertook the actual management and acted as

field-master, on the understanding that the Committee should provide the necessary funds. This arrangement continued for seven seasons, and appears to have proved satisfactory. The income of the Hunt crept up to, and even exceeded, £2,000; any deficiency on the annual accounts was met by a guarantee from certain members. It is interesting to find that in these early days the Heythrop tradition, that it is best to entrust the affairs of the Hunt to "some one in the country," was already established. At a Hunt Meeting in 1855 "a letter was read from Mr. Lowndes, offering to come to the country, bringing his own hounds, in the event of a sufficient subscription being offered—but not stating what amount: Resolved that the retention of the pack in the country must be insisted on under any arrangement. A letter was read from Mr. Wall, now hunting the Hambleton country, making inquiries about the Heythrop country and subscription: Resolved, that steps be taken to find out the manner in which Mr. Wall hunts his present country." The Committee were hard-headed men and remained in office.

But at this stage they had to face further anxieties. In 1857 the members were notified that "the uncertain tenure of the present kennels at Heythrop, and the dilapidated state of the premises, render it desirable that the question of finding a new site for the buildings required by the Hunt be taken into early consideration by the subscribers." Once

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

more the members of the Hunt rose to the occasion. Two fields on the outskirts of Chipping Norton were purchased for £1,200; new kennels and stables were erected, and assigned to Trustees to hold for the Hunt. The necessary funds were provided in the first instance by subscribers, whose names appear in the original Deed of Settlement—Lord Redesdale and Mr. Davies each contributed £500: Mr. Langston, Mr. Hall, Mr. Gaskell (the new owner of Kiddington Hall), Mr. Barnett, and Mr. Grisewood of Daylesford each contributed £200: subsequently Mr. Albert Brassey of Heythrop and Mr. James Mason of Eynsham Hall, each contributed £100. The balance was raised by other subscriptions, and by a mortgage on the property, to be discharged by means of an annual rent of £100, which was to be paid by the Hunt to the Trustees. Two cottages for Hunt servants were added some years later.

In 1862 Mr. Hall announced that his health would not permit him to continue in his position of Master of the Hounds and “the meeting in accepting his resignation tendered to him their most grateful acknowledgments for the services he had rendered to the Hunt, particularly in continuing to perform his duties of Master during the last two seasons at considerable personal inconvenience.”

An anonymous poet has left the following record of a great hunt of this period:

MR. HALL'S MASTERSHIP
TANGLEY COOMBS

OR

A RUN WITH THE HEYTHROP HOUNDS

on Wednesday, 31st December, 1856

The north wind blew, and earth awhile remained
By adamantine frost securely chained ;
And which to horse and hound brought some repose,
But found the moody huntsman full of woes.
The 'Squire was gloomy in his ancient Hall,
While high-bred steeds stood idle in each stall ;
And oft he wandered forth, with listless tread,
To view the weathercock, and shake his head,
With walking-stick in hand the ground to try,
Or note a sign of change in earth or sky ;
Until anon his heart with rapture burn'd
When from the realms of ice the vane had turn'd,
And southern breezes, and the gentle rain,
Releas'd the captive earth, and hunter train.
The morning dawned, the last of the old year,
When gallant men from each adjoining shire,
With well-splashed tops, on mettled high-breds rode
To hunt near noble Dynevor's abode,¹
And 'squire, and noble—many a veteran bold ;
Some on proud fame's bright records long enroll'd—
And ladies too, with blooming cheeks so fair,
To grace the "meet," and gladden all, were there.
The veteran Huntsman in the ring was seen,
Surrounded by his staff, in Lincoln green,
And famous Hounds, unrivall'd in the chase,
For nose, strength, beauty, symmetry, and pace.

¹ Barrington Park.—It is situated on the road from Burford to North-leach, and being contiguous to the Vale of White Horse and Lord Fitzhardinge's countries, many sportsmen from each of them frequently meet these Hounds there.

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

The Field with pride the generous Master saw,
And taking note of time, prepar'd to draw,
And thus address'd it, as they moved away,
"I think, Sirs, we shall show some sport to-day."
Prophetic words of truth each sportsman knows
Who rode to see that day's eventful close.
And all, as various in their garb and grade,
Some oddly mounted, join'd the cavalcade.
And such a host—all eager for the find—
Of noisy foot-folks followed fast behind.
But o'er the next two hours we draw a veil—
Of foxes mob'd to death—a dismal tale.¹
And go where Fortune deigned to yield at last
A rich reward for disappointments past.
Ah! fickle Goddess, coy as any bride,
Thy favors fall when oft they seem denied.
Scene, Tangle Coombs—time, just the hour of one,
The "toddlers" gone, lost, distanc'd, and undone;
When a select and bold well-mounted band
Of sportsmen—game as any in the land—
Came trotting up, and drawing near the Wood,
Around in eager expectation stood.
The hounds, scarce waiting for the huntsman's cry,
Dashed madly in, with waving sterns on high,
Spread o'er the ground, and roving here and there,
Search every likely spot with jealous care.
Keen eyes peer round, men hardly breathe a word,
While the glad huntsman's mellow cries are heard
From time to time, as cheer on cheer resounds,
"Yoicks! try for him." "Push him out good hounds!"
"Yoicks! *rowst* him out there²!" loud the echo fills—
Oh ye who love sweet music hear Jem Hills!

¹ It was impossible to prevent this—so numerous and so full of "holiday" were the foot people.

² A phrase peculiar to this celebrated huntsman.

MR. HALL'S MASTERSHIP

The hounds seem thrill'd, at each repeated call,
As if his mighty spirit fill'd them all ;
And feathering for the find—now, sure they know—
Dash through the wood, and shake it as they go.
Heard you that whimper ? hark ! a surer cry
Of *Jupiter*, whose tongue ne'er told a lie,
“ Have at him, Jupiter ! rowst him out old boy ! ”
Oft, oft, the huntsman thunders in his joy ;
That hound fast leading with a jealous heart,
Unwilling for the rest to bear their part ;¹
But their loud cries still joining more and more
Now swell at length to one continuous roar.
Swiftly all speed together as they throng,
The thicket crashing as they tear along.
Loud crack the whips, while restless steeds and men
Prepare to join the rapturous chase again.
The jay screams loud—sure sign a fox is there—
And the wild pigeon swiftly cleaves the air.
The feathered tribe and game in wild affright
From the strange uproar urge their rapid flight.
Now scores of horsemen with mad ardour burn,
Excited, pleased, this way and that they turn,
Until at last with furious speed they go
As some shrill voice screams the glad “ tally-ho ! ”
Repeated holloas now brook no delay,
But plainly tell the fox has “ gone away.”
The huntsman winds his horn, his voice resounds
“ Forrard, away ! ” to gather up the hounds,
As dashing from the covert on they go,
And the wild clamor shakes the vale below.
“ Forrard, hark forrard ! ” onward fast they fly,
Heads up, sterns down, all racing in full cry.
Well plac'd, well pleas'd, and speeding like the wind,

¹ He is a hound of great excellence ; but is sometimes a little apt to keep the good news to himself.

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

A host of horsemen rattled on behind.
Red coats and black, a varied group they come,
Some turning from, while others turn to, home
In the hot chase, to tax the strength to-day
Of "my black horse," "bay mare," or "gallant grey."
Now passing Fifield village, swift their flight,
The uproar loud, and beautiful the sight.
O'er hedges, walls, o'er ditches, gates, and stiles,
Field after field soon lengthen into miles.
For Bruern woods the fox now seems to lead
With gallant heart and unabated speed.
There many a rider turn'd, without a doubt,
That there he should fall in—and so fell out—
This ancient monkish home¹—as story says—
And fair seat of the Copes, in after days,
The fox pass'd by, and left some hunters there,
A prey to sad reflection or despair.
The chase to Milton sweeping down the vale,
While speed nor sport yet for a moment fail.
The rush of many steeds, the cry of hounds,
The huntsman's holloa, and his horn, resounds.
Away! away! still onward reynard flies,
Away! away! the joyous hunter cries,
While echo answers to the merry tale,
And with a thousand rumors rings the dale.
Excited villagers in ecstasy
Rush forth to see the cavalcade sweep by.
Now full in view each eager sportsman sees,
Lifting its tower-like form above the trees,
Old Shipton Court, the ancient Seat of Reade,
To which the gallant fox seems fast to speed,
But quickly turn'd; and soon all doubts were lost,

¹ Bruern Abbey was founded in 1147 by one Nicholas Bassett, for Cistercian Monks. The fine Seat afterwards erected on its site by the Cope family was accidentally destroyed by fire.—The Woods are of great extent, and are perhaps as fine fox coverts as any in England.

MR. HALL'S MASTERSHIP

River,¹ and railway,² he had boldly cross'd ;
And eastward turning, as at first he turn'd,
From the "far west," his homeward path discern'd.
And down the vale the favouring western wind
Brought to his ear the clamour from behind.
Signs of distress brave steeds begin to show,
And many now the eager chase forego,
Their fetlocks clogg'd, sunk in the heavy soil
Strength ebb'd away, o'erpower'd with their toil.
Who falters, fails ; the pack not standing still,
But streaming on, went screaming up the hill
For Merriscourt, by roving *Sinbad* led,
As if they knew their fox not far ahead.
Bent for his native earths, he knew the way,
Nor could the sheltering Norrells tempt his stay.
And down the hill to Pudlicote he bore,
There deemed his dangers past, his travels o'er,
With hounds at fault ; and moody silence round,
Save when the huntsman's hearty cries resound.
For he look'd confident—though full of care—
Most of the field were gloomy with despair ;
And some impatient at the long delay,
Back to the Cotswolds bent their homeward way.³
"He must be somewhere," was Jem's cheerful cry,
"And, if above ground, yet to-day shall die."
Cast upon cast now craftily he tries,
Until from yon small copse poor reynard flies.
Hark ! hark ! to *Mystery*, with recovered scent—
Hark ! hark ! to *Gretna*, following where he went—
Hark ! hark ! they all in merry chorus sing,
And launching down, make the whole valley ring ;
Hark ! the huntsman winds his echoing horn—

¹ The Evenlode.

² The Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton.

³ Several of the Gloucestershire sportsmen thinking the run was over left the hounds at this check.

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

Sure, with an ear for music he was born—
The note prolonging, playing quite a tune,
His face as radiant as bright skies in June.
By Lower Court—where fond tradition says
A rare old 'Squire maintained in other days
His hounds and house, and gave his friends good cheer,
And all with just five hundred pounds a-year.
Past Chadlington they go a merry burst,
With nearly as much vigour as at first.
The peasant pauses from his labour now,
On the hill slopes the ploughman stops his plough
With listening ear; and down in pastures green,
Scampering away, the timid sheep are seen,
With anxious looks, all huddling here and there.
While flocks of rooks and starlings cloud the air,
And circling round with noisy cries they go,
Wondering what mischief's going on below.
Past Spelsbury now—where in the church hard by
Entombed the ancient Lee's of Ditchley lie¹—
Past the old Mill, through Dean Grove like a shot
The valiant reynard flies and lingers not,
As if for Charlbury town, which meets our gaze,
Crown'd with its square Church Tower of other days
Like castle battlements, so tall and grey,
A noble object many a mile away.
Men stand on walls, or climb the rising mounds,
Struck with the coming music of the hounds,
Which wakeful watch-dogs heard on every side,
And loud and long most furiously replied.
The fox less strong, yet persevering still
For his old point, ascends the rising hill,

¹ Amongst many fine monuments of the Family is one to the memory of the famous Sir Henry Lee, Bart.—who died in 1621—of white marble, with a square cupola supported by black marble pillars, beneath which, in a recumbent posture, lies the Knight, in armour, with his Lady by his side. It is a fine piece of workmanship of that period.

MR. HALL'S MASTERSHIP

And over Taston fields with pace more slow,
With miry pads, and fine brush falling low.
Draggled and wet, in pitiable plight,
His tongue hangs out, more painful grows his flight.
While in his wake the pack, still toiling lay,
O'er greasy fallows picked their dubious way.
With a view holloa—musical and clear—
Down from the upland, rang upon the ear.
“Ah! that's the Doctor,” was the huntsman's cry,
“That holloa's sure”—and faster soon they fly.
All knew him well, for 'tis a friend they see,
The friend of suffering humanity,
And a true sportsman, we who know him well
Must own a truth which friendship bids us tell.
Homeward returning from his duty done,
To see the close of this eventful run,
With joyous heart, he sporting metal show'd
And quicken'd reynard's pace across the road.¹
His favourite mare first heard far down the dale
The sound of horn and hounds borne on the gale,
And prick'd her listening ears intent and true,
Seem'd wildly pleas'd, for well those tones she knew,
And when swept by the advancing steeds and men
Nought could restrain her from the chase again.
Few horsemen come—and those begrim'd with mire,
On reeking steeds with hearts that would not tire.
The hedger turns, and stops his bill to say,
“Blow me, they've had a smoking run to-day.”
Top'd with its clump of firs the home, the hill,
For which our fox has struggled—struggles still—
He sees at last, and finds, when nearly won
That strength and speed, when needed most, are gone.
And when to Shilcot earths he came at last,
For friendly refuge from his travels past,

¹ The Charlbury and Enstone Turnpike Road, and opposite to Taston Village where the fox crossed it.

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

He met foul play—for who can call it fair—
He saw a threatening Whip already there !
Then through the brushwood crawl'd with panting breath,
In one short interval 'twixt life and death.
The hounds had paus'd, but soon that pause was o'er,
And onward, with resistless force, they bore ;
As through the copse a sportsman, good and true,
Lynx-eyed, beheld him going full in view.
FRANK HOLLAND views him ! and the echoes swell
His wild cheer, sounding like poor reynard's knell.
Then closing up, the unrelenting pack
Saw him, and dashing headlong on his track,
Ravening for blood more furious now their cry,
Worn out, the gallant fox stood still—to die.
Near Ditchley Hall Jem Hills' "who-whoop" resounds,
And dirge-like music of the baying hounds.
Some panting lie, and little seem to care
Which gain the honours, or which claim a share.
Some, dyed with blood ; all, painted o'er with soil,
Tell plainly of long travel, and of toil.
And of those gallant sportsmen, many a score,
Who did their best—what man could e'er do more—
To see the finish of this famous chase,
And with the winners stand "in pride of place ;"
We gloat not o'er mishaps, recount no tale
Of those whose destiny it was to fail.
The ground from recent frost, and thaw, and shower,
Rode stiff enough to tax a giant's power ;
And, if we wonder, 'tis that even those
Few favor'd ones we sing should see the close.
Who saw the finish ? Those already named,
And REDESDALE's Lord, in field and senate famed.
With HALL, the Master, and a master too
Faultless as any favor'd field e'er knew.
Generous and kind, he well performs his part,
Skill'd in the knowledge of the noble art.

MR. HALL'S MASTERSHIP

Across a country—glorious sport to see—
To lead the field, what man more pleased than he.
WHIPPY, of Tar Wood fame, on *Chanticleer* ;
A veteran sportsman good, of course was here.
GASKELL and LINDOW, true as steel were found,
ANSTICE and WALLER joined the circle round
The dying fox—and due observance paid
To cherished forms by ancient custom made.
The sun was going down o'er Cornbury Park—
For days were short, and lengthen'd nights were dark—
Friendly adieux exchanged, all glad and gay
The wearied sportsmen went their homeward way.
Our task is done, no more remains to tell,
Retiring with a bow, we say—farewell.

Mr. Henry Hall was followed by Colonel Thomas of Woodstock, who had kept a pack of hounds in the Crimea, and Mr. Grisewood of Daylesford under a somewhat new arrangement. "The management of the establishment in the field and kennel was committed to Colonel Thomas and to such Members of the Hunt alone as he may from time to time appoint to discharge any duty in the field or elsewhere which he may be prevented from attending to himself." To Mr. Grisewood was entrusted the superintendence of the expenditure and finance. Perhaps this marks the recognition of a principle since established in the Heythrop and several other countries, that a solid member of the Hunt, and preferably the Secretary, should be responsible for what soldiers call the "Q side," i.e. the administrative work of the Quartermaster-General, leaving the hands of the Master free for

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operations in the field. The increasing number of problems involved in carrying on a Hunt to-day have rendered this division of labour even more necessary than it was before. It is by no means certain that the qualifications required for Mastership will include a capacity for administrative work, and perhaps the duties involved in hunting a country are sufficiently onerous, without the Master being called upon to look after it as well. At any rate, Mr. Grisewood remained in office as treasurer to the Hunt after the resignation of Colonel Thomas, and the financial situation steadily improved under his guidance.

Two years later, in 1864, Mr. A. W. Hall, who had succeeded his father at Barton Abbey, "undertook the office of Master in the Field, having very liberally consented to take the entire mastership in the following season, receiving £1,500 to cover all expenses, he paying £100 a year for the Kennels (on which there is a mortgage of £877 12s.)," and the Hunt entered on a period of comparative stability. Baily's contributor records that Mr. Hall was "a most enthusiastic sportsman and has done the thing in capital style, turning the men out well," but this brief eulogy does less than justice to a rather remarkable personality. Brought up in the most prosperous days of "Hall's Oxford Brewery," he was a man of wide activities, and played a prominent part in the affairs of Oxfordshire until his death. He represented Oxford City in Parliament, and was

a well-known public speaker, more effective perhaps in his own countryside than at Westminster, because he appealed more to the emotions than to cold reason.

At this time "the question as to the manner in which the fixtures should be made was taken into consideration, and the following arrangement, subject to such modifications as circumstances from time to time may render expedient, was agreed to : Monday, the central country round Chipping Norton ; Wednesday, alternately in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, Bruern and Tangle to be considered as Gloucestershire fixtures ; Friday, Gloucestershire ; and Saturday, the Oxfordshire Woodlands, including the Forest." It was subsequently agreed that "Bradwell Grove be considered either an Oxfordshire or a Gloucestershire fixture at the direction of the Master." This arrangement continued until it was modified in recent years to meet the exigencies of Shooting Syndicates on Saturdays. Continuity in policy has always been a characteristic of the Heythrop Hunt, and was assisted by the fact that the veteran Jem Hills had carried the horn continuously until his retirement in 1865. In September of that year Lord Redesdale and the Master notified the members that : "In conformity with the resolution agreed to at a Meeting of the Members of the Heythrop Hunt held on April 13th, 1865,—'That a sum of £1,000 should be raised, by which an

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annuity of not less than £100 a year may be secured to Hills on his retirement, and that subscriptions for that purpose were to be paid to an account opened at the Stourbridge and Kidderminster Bank, Chipping Norton, in the names of Lord Redesdale and Mr. Hall,' we have the pleasure to inform you that the following subscriptions, amounting to £1,080 3s., have been received, and the proceeds invested, £880 18s. 6d. in the purchase of a Government annuity of £100 for Hills' life, £196 2s. 6d. in Brighton guaranteed six per cent stock, in the names of Mr. Hall and Hills, disposal at the pleasure of the latter by will, or by agreement with Mr. Hall during his lifetime, and the balance of £3 2s. in postage stamps and other expenses consequent on the subscription.

It will be gratifying to those who have thus shown their sense of Hills' services, and interest in his future position, to know that the Yeomen and Farmers in the Hunt have raised a purse among themselves, to be presented by them to Hills in such a manner as shall appear to them to mark most openly their regard for him, and that the earth-stoppers within the Hunt have availed themselves of this opportunity to present him with a cup on his retirement.

(Signed) REDESDALE
A. W. HALL."

Jem Hills was succeeded by his son Tom, who hunted the hounds for four seasons, when he went as huntsman to the Cotswold. His place was taken by Stephen Goodall from the V.W.H. who proved a wonderful huntsman. Meanwhile Mr. Hall had made a new departure by hunting the bitch pack himself twice a week, mainly in the wall country—the only period in the history of the Hunt when an amateur has hunted hounds. This is perhaps hardly the place to renew the never-ending discussion of the relative merits of amateur and professional huntsmen. But in recent years when problems of finance have constrained members of the Heythrop Hunt to consider these alternatives, they have at least been able to compare their past history with that of neighbouring Hunts, who have entrusted their fortunes to amateur huntsmen, and perhaps to reflect that on the whole the latter have got into more trouble. It is, however, true that Mr. Hall would be cited as an instance of brilliant success by the amateur. Hitherto the field had been accustomed to the lightning methods of Jem Hills—quick forward casts, determined by an uncanny intuition about the run of a fox, and assisted by a first whip with good eyes, who knew where to look. The advocates of this method contend that, on the light bad-scenting soil of the Cotswolds, on most days a fox can run faster than hounds can hunt him, and that unless the huntsman is quick enough to snatch every possible opportunity of getting on

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

better terms with his fox, the closer the hounds hunt the farther they are left behind. And there is no doubt that, when the huntsman has real genius, the quick method has been wonderfully successful. But if he has not, or if his luck is out, its results can be deplorable. The huntsman's activities seem to reveal to an ever-increasing extent illustrations of what has been described as "a bad hurry," and the co-operation of his hounds soon becomes more perfunctory than spontaneous. The disciples of the other school argue that, even on the bad-scenting Cotswolds, a huntsman who relies on close-hunting hounds shows more real sport, and probably kills as many foxes in the end, as the galloping type. At any rate, Mr. Hall hunted on the silent principle, letting his hounds hunt without assistance, and seldom lifting them to a holloa. With a pack of hounds and a field accustomed to the Jem Hills method of hunting, the new tactics did not answer at first, and sport was very bad. But Mr. Hall persevered, and by the end of his first season his bitches hunted like harriers, casting themselves at every check, and showing the most undeniable sport, which continued until the end of his mastership. It was a triumph of orthodoxy. But Mr. Hall enjoyed one great advantage which is denied to his imitators to-day. His field consisted of only fifty or sixty people, most of whom understood and appreciated the niceties of hunting. His hounds were not required to hunt with one hundred and

fifty well-mounted and ambitious ladies and gentlemen riding in crescent formation round them.

Perhaps the changed conditions under which sport is carried on in the Heythrop country can best be realized if the reader will accompany Master George Dawkins, son of the incumbent of Farmington, and just home from school, on the first day's hunting of the Christmas holidays. The scene is laid on a bright winter morning in the late 'sixties at New Barn Inn, a solitary house where the Cheltenham road crosses a windswept Cotswold tableland east of Northleach. The general character of the country would be much the same as it is to-day, a bleak, bare expanse of forty- and fifty-acre fields divided by stone walls, and an occasional belt of beeches planted for shelter. It is a country of big farms of five hundred acres and more, with solid stone-built and stone-slatted barns and buildings, grouped around a really substantial farmhouse. Except for a home paddock and an occasional field of sainfoin, which stands here for seven years, the whole of the land is under the plough. The wheat is planted and up, the ox teams are at work on the stubbles, and flocks of long-woolled, long-legged Cotswold sheep are penned over immense tracts of turnips. It all has a look of solid prosperity: the land is well cultivated, walls and gates are well kept, for though the fields are now deserted a lot of labour is employed, as can well be done when a labourer's wage is about 10s. a week, and wheat is worth

THE HEYTHROP HUNT

50s. a quarter. There are no poultry houses in the fields, and wire is unknown.

There is quite a crowd of foot-people at the Inn, for the hounds and hunt servants have come on overnight, and in the somewhat uneventful year of rural Gloucestershire a popular meet, which will be attended by every celebrity in the neighbourhood, is an occasion not to be missed. The hounds first claim our attention, a bitch pack in hard condition, rather smaller and lighter of bone than those of to-day, and half of them badger-pied, in charge of the first whip, Arthur Hazelton. The second whip is an obvious character—an ancient grey-headed hunt servant, who answers to the name of George, and is only allowed two horses for the season: he has long ago decided, perhaps not unreasonably, that jumping fences forms no part of his official duties. At all events he provides an admirable foil to the Master, for young Squire Hall is a fine figure of a man, tall, with curly black hair and bright eyes, set off by a well-cut coat of green plush, with a slip of scarlet waistcoat showing below his stock. He has been picked up at Shipton Court, which he rented for some years, and driven on to the meet by Mr. Foster Melliar in his brougham. The latter has started from North Aston, more than twenty-five miles away, soon after daybreak, and changed horses at Chipping Norton. The future Hunt Secretary is a big heavy man, dressed in a long double-breasted scarlet coat, with drab coloured breeches,

and long tops to his boots extending half-way down his calves.

The spectators note with becoming respect the two great men of the locality, Lord Sherborne of Sherborne Park, and Mr. Waller of Farmington Lodge, who breeds blood-stock and races, and has won the Hunt Cup at Ascot in his time. Another popular local figure is a quiet clean-shaven man on a thoroughbred horse, Mr. Jim Golby, who trains in Stowell Park and keeps his stables in Northleach, living close to the Wheatsheaf. He trained many good horses, notably the Nun, who won a lot of steeplechases ; but popularity was his ruin, for his friends ate him out of house and home, and he died in very poor circumstances. From the Great House at Burford comes Captain Marriot on a confidential-looking chestnut ; he has two pre-occupations—hunting and brown sherry, and his fingers are so full of chalk stones he cannot put on gloves, but encases his hands in a sort of fingerless muffler, which just enables him to control a quiet horse. Mr. John Talbot Rice from Oddington wears a black coat and hunting cap, because he farms his own land. Mr. Algy Rushout comes from his brother's house at Sezincote on his famous spotted cob, a wonder over the walls, with Mr. Grisewood, a wealthy stockbroker who has recently bought the Daylesford property. Among the younger men are Mr. Fred Witts and Captain Thursby, the hard riders of the Hunt, at whom the

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Master looks askance, and Mr. Davies Lockwood, a young soldier home on leave from India, who afterwards took Orders and succeeded his father as Rector of Kingham, where the pretty lychgate to the churchyard reminds future generations of a much-loved sporting parson. The Church is represented by the Rev. Van Notten Pole of Swell, described as a surly old man who hardly spoke to any one and complained that sport was not what it was when the Duke hunted the country. Conspicuous among several sporting farmers are Mr. Price of Shipton, Mr. Handy, and Mr. Tom Tayler of Turkdean, who can beat any of them over the walls on light-weight horses bought out of the Welsh droves. The field is considered a large one, but there are not more than sixty horsemen, most of them middle-aged or elderly men who know all there is to know about hunting. The horses are mostly of the low compact sort with "tail off and mane on," a complete contrast to the type supposed to illustrate blood and quality to-day, and each of them is prudently equipped with a breast-plate. There are only two ladies out, Mrs. Hall, the wife of the Master, who goes well, and another picturesque figure in a long habit skirt, faintly reminiscent of Miss Molesworth's heroines: this is Miss Wynter, who rides quietly about with her father, the Rector of Daylesford (where he had preached to Warren Hastings) and takes no undue risks.

The first draw is Lodge Park, which is what the

Irish would call a small "demesne," surrounded by a high stone wall, and attached to a miniature Palladian residence. A brace of foxes are soon on foot, and the bitches get away on rather bad terms with the more adventurous one, who takes the familiar line past Eastington and right-handed to the Cheltenham road. The bitches have to feel for the scent in every field, but the Master sits like a statue and lets them work out the line for themselves. Any attempt by the hard riders to press them provokes instant rebuke from one or more of the senior members of the field, who know what the situation demands and have no notion of having their sport spoilt. However, this protection soon becomes unnecessary, for the fox has crossed the Cheltenham road and threaded his way through the small enclosures near Farmington where Mr. Waller keeps his blood-stock. Contemporary science seems to have held that solitary confinement was the correct treatment for blood-stock, and the walls here are so high that only a cat or a fox—or the Heythrop bitches—can get over them. This enables hounds to settle down to hunt, and they work out the line over the cold ploughs, where the North-leach fever hospital now stands, to the Fosse, with a rare cry and carrying a good head—genuine fox-hunting, though without the enchantment of pace, which provides the real charm of a gallop over the walls. But the Master's patience matches the perseverance of his bitches, and so the chase pro-

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ceeds—a long left-handed circle past Hazleton and back over the Fosse, turning left again south of Lodge Park, until hounds are finally run out of scent between Aldsworth and Westwell—time, the best part of two hours.

The next draw is “Tom Jolly’s”—the minute gorse covert surrounded by a stone wall which has provided so many stout foxes for successive generations in the Heythrop country. The Master walks quietly up to the covert with the pack at his heels, and blows his horn: the little covert is true to its traditions and an old fox is instantly viewed away on the farther side. This is a very different affair from the morning hunt. The bitches start in the same field as their fox, and though he unsights them at the first wall, they get him hot and keep him hot—with a corresponding improvement in the scent. He is a good fox, and sets his mask on a zigzag course for V.W.H. territory, but the bitches turn with him wherever he goes, and never give him an instant’s breathing space until he is pulled down in the open in Williamstrip Park. Time forty-five minutes; the pace has been good enough for every one, and some of the walls have provided plenty of scope for talent. Horses have had more than enough, and most of the field have a ride of ten miles or more in front of them before they can begin to think of a six o’clock dinner and a bottle of the
'34 port.

In 1870 Mr. Grisewood resigned the office of

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Treasurer, in which capacity he had rendered valuable services to the Hunt. Under his management its finances had prospered. The annual expenditure had been met from income, without calling on the guarantors for any serious amounts, and the Kennel debt had been paid off. His place was taken by Mr. W. M. Foster Melliar of North Aston Hall, who subsequently combined the duties of Treasurer and Secretary. He was a real enthusiast, with an agreeable resemblance to Mr. Jorrocks, both in appearance and habits of thought. Though he lived on the extreme edge of the country, he seldom missed a day's hunting, keeping several horses at Chipping Norton and often driving incalculable miles to the meets in his brougham. He took a special pride in his covert at Dean Hill, and would never allow it to be cub-hunted. He also had a good stone bottom made in the Deddington Brook, always regarded as a formidable obstacle, at a selected spot below this covert. Whenever hounds crossed it, he charged ahead and jumped it with the completest confidence before an admiring field, who only discovered after some years that at this point there was only three feet of water running over a good firm bottom.

The historic hunt of Mr. Hall's mastership took place in his last season, and was described many years later by Mr. Foster Melliar in a letter to the *Field*, written in connection with a discussion on "long points."

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On December 16th, 1872, the Heythrop met here (North Aston). The weather was fine and open, but we made a bad start, chopping one fox and running another to ground without any run. Then we drew a little osier bed close to Clifton Mill, on the bank of the Cherwell (our boundary). It was apparently blank, but when we were two fields beyond it there was a holloa, so we galloped back, and were told by a member of the Hunt, who was a little late, that he had seen a fox go away. I held up my hat to Hall, who came back, and laid the hounds on quite quietly, when they settled at once, and this great run began. The fox made first to Deddington, then, leaving that on his right, went up the Duns Tew Vale to Hawk Hill: passed that on his left, and, having Newington on his right and Wiggington on his left, went on up to Wiggington Heath. Passed that on his left, to Tadmarton, Swalcliffe Park, and Sibford. Here, close to Sibford Rough, we lost, owing to the fox being chased by a sheepdog on Sibford Grounds Farm—nine miles from point to point, and twelve as we ran; time, two hours and thirty minutes.

So you see it was not fast, but a grand, straight, hunting run. I do not remember any particular check, but we kept going on at a fair pace. I think I was the only one who got a second horse at Wiggington Heath. I had my two best ones—a white at first, and finished on a black. “Shotley” and Hermon-Hodge must have had a terrible ride to Oxford, more than twenty miles and a pitch-dark night. I have often wondered how and when they got home. It was hard lines to be proctorized at the end! The last field but one was grass, and the bitches streamed up under the hedge, then turned through

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it into a stubble, which was mown and full of haulm cocks, in the middle of which we threw up. In one corner was a sheepfold and shepherd making all snug for the night. We asked him, but he was sullen and nasty; and my impression is that some one jumped off his horse in a rage and offered to fight him: but we worked it down, and the two undergraduates went off in what they thought was the way to Oxford. Then the whipper-in (poor Jack Hazleton) came up and begged Hall to send him home with the hounds, as they were curling up in two and threes to sleep on the haulm cocks. Whilst they were being got together I asked the shepherd quietly (after half a crown) whether his dog had run him. "Yes, he did." That was enough for me: for, of course, our fox was so beat the dog must have killed him. Well, if we had only caught him it would have been perfect.

Mr. Foster Melliar's account is corroborated by Mr. Charles Richardson, the well-known hunting correspondent "Shotley," and by the present Lord Wyfold, both of whom were undergraduates at Oxford at the time and saw the hunt. It was further impressed on their memories by the fact that they finished with very tired horses, in an unknown country, some fourteen miles from Hopcrofts Holt—where they had left a dog-cart and tandem—and that it soon became dark. However, they managed to gruel their horses, and led them most of the way back to the Holt. Survivors' statements differ as to how the return journey in the tandem to Oxford was accomplished, but it is agreed that their leader

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trotted alongside most of the way, and that they ran into the Proctors at 11 p.m. As Lord Wyfold remarks in the account which he has been kind enough to furnish, "Those were the days."

In 1873 Mr. Hall resigned the Mastership, and Mr. Albert Brassey of Heythrop was unanimously elected Master, when a letter was read from Lord Redesdale—the Nestor of the Hunt—"expressing his approval of the choice of the country, and offering his cordial co-operation to the new Master, Mr. Brassey."

CHAPTER V

MR. ALBERT BRASSEY'S MASTERSHIP

MR. ALBERT BRASSEY'S long mastership might be described, for many reasons, as the golden age of the Heythrop Hunt. Hitherto the Hunt finances had always given cause for anxiety, but thanks to Mr. Brassey's generosity these anxieties were now at an end. He accepted office with a guarantee of £1,500—the same as his predecessor's—and this sum remained unchanged until the end of his mastership. Poultry claims, damage, covert rents, earth-stopping, and all the additional and increasing expenses involved in hunting a country under modern conditions were met by the Master. And as the cost of hunting a country at the time was generally estimated at £1,000 for every day in the week that hounds hunted, Mr. Brassey's contribution to sport within this period would have absorbed a considerable fortune. But, apart from this consideration, Mr. Brassey appeared to his many admirers—the author among them—to unite almost every qualification which is to be desired in a Master of Fox-hounds. He was devoted to sport, he was both capable and energetic, and was blessed with a natural kindness of heart and genial manner

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which gained universal popularity. All the conditions were favourable for sport. Income tax was only a few pence in the pound and death duties were unknown. Farmers were prosperous and rents were still rising. Thus the resident landowners, who had always been the mainstay of the Hunt, found it a comparatively easy matter to provide all necessary facilities for the Master. Four large and practically contiguous estates, Heythrop, Sarsden, Ditchley, and Blenheim, ran through the middle of the country, from a point north of Chipping Norton almost to the outskirts of Oxford. On the eastern side of this central block the estates of Great Tew, Barton, Rousham, Kiddington, and Glympton were all in good hands. The same applied to the estates of Farmington, Sherborne, Barrington, Bradwell Grove, Swinbrook, Cornbury, and Eynsham on the south and west sides of the country. Estates were then maintained in accordance with the high standard of the times : the farms and coverts were looked after, and the interests of fox-hunting were secure under a system of liberal estate management, prosperous tenants, and good game-keepers. Through the 'seventies farmers were still making money, and though a black period of agricultural depression dates from the year 1879, its effects were only gradually felt, as the farmers still had money behind them. Wire was practically unknown : old members of the Hunt can probably recall the horrified outcry which was raised when this barbarous

invention was discovered in the wall country, and Mr. Brassey had been Master for thirty years before it was found necessary to form a Wire Committee. The country was not what would now be described as a "residential" one—it was still a purely agricultural district, divided into considerable estates, with four small market towns on its outskirts—and from a hunting point of view was not fashionable.

The young Master was very keen, devoted to sport, and spared neither pains nor money to produce it. He had rowed for his School and College, graduated with the Oxford University Dragoon Guards, and hunted the Regimental Harriers in Ireland during his brief period of service in the 14th Hussars. He had married the eldest daughter of Lord Clanmorris two years before he took the country, and settled down with his young wife at Adlestrop to the serious business of fox-hunting, while Heythrop—his father's wedding present—was being rebuilt. Several of Mrs. Brassey's Irish relations and friends—with plenty of hard riders among them—were seen in the Heythrop field during the following years. There were Mrs. Brassey's parents, Lord and Lady Clanmorris, her two brothers, Mr. Burton and Mr. Bentinck Bingham, and her uncle Mr. Albert Bingham with his two sons. Mr. George Gough, 14th Hussars, a fine horseman, is still remembered in the Heythrop country: also Mrs. Barry (Mrs. Brassey's sister) and the late Lady McCalmont (M.F.H. Co. Kildare

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1933/34) as "a slim pretty girl, with her hair down her back." Hard-riding Irishmen seem to create, or even to provoke, a spirit of emulation when hounds run, but it is recorded that the best of them could never beat Mr. Fred Witts of Stow, who was a heavy-weight, and never rode expensive horses. But he was desperately keen, just as ready to jump a big place at four o'clock in the afternoon as he was in the morning and, like all the best horsemen, got very few falls. Local talent was also represented by Mr. E. T. Godman of Banks Fee, and his brother-in-law Captain Thursby of Broadwell Hill, each of whom maintained a good fox covert besides showing the way when hounds ran.

From his predecessor Mr. Brassey inherited Stephen Goodall, a huntsman of the dashing order, who extracted the maximum of enjoyment from his sport. He always recalled with affection an earlier place in Ireland, where he sometimes kept his boots on for three or four days at a time, not having had occasion to remove them at night in that hospitable country. He was a courageous horseman, and more than once imposed a high trial on the feelings of Mr. Brassey, who held the orthodox views of an M.F.H. on the treatment of his horses—notably when in the course of a morning's cub-hunting he jumped both the railway gates at the level crossing below the kennels. He was also somewhat impatient of any measure of restraint conveyed by the Master's horn. But he showed great sport in the

Heythrop country, and an annuity was provided for him by the Master and subscribers on his retirement in 1875.

Sport continued good under his successor, Arthur Hazelton, more generally known as "Jack," who had been first whip for seven seasons and carried the horn for fifteen more. In him Mr. Brassey had a more amenable huntsman, and was able to apply his own orderly methods for showing sport under the most favourable conditions. Hazelton was a great favourite with the field and with the farmers, and perhaps for this reason Mr. Brassey retained him as huntsman for some years after failing powers and other considerations indicated that a change was advisable. He also took an active part in raising a special fund for Hazelton when he retired. His successor was Richard Stovin, an ex-huntsman of the Bicester, who was a huntsman of considerable experience, and what is called "a gentleman's servant" of the old-fashioned sort. His services as a huntsman had been handsomely recognized in the Bicester and in Lord Portman's countries. He served Mr. Brassey well, and achieved at least one classic hunt in the Heythrop country on the 2nd of February, 1894, of which the following account was given in the *Banbury Guardian* :

Soon after eleven Stovin, with the dog pack, commenced to draw Bourton Wood and a fox was very

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quickly on the move, and ran once round the wood, with hounds close behind him, the foot-people delighting to holloa him over every ride till he went away at the top end for Batsford, past the mansion, through the park, and on to Cadley Arbour, straight through and away for Aston Spinneys, and through each of these. Then he crossed the railway and the river into the Warwickshire country. The field here had to gallop round a long way to find a bridge, the river being quite unjumpable, but we could see them taking the line up over the hill and when we had crossed the stream and joined them again they were bringing their line along under a hedgerow in perfect style. We were now in a beautiful grass vale near Ditchford running towards Stretton, after crossing the brook in the valley, over which our huntsman gave us a lead which only three others cared to follow, the remainder finding a bridge handy. After passing the village of Stretton, the fox had been viewed crossing the allotments near to the inn (Golden Cross), the well-known meeting place of the Warwickshire. "About three minutes in front," said a labourer, who was hedge-cutting on the top of the hill, where we turned towards that splendid gorse, the pride of South Warwickshire, and "What hounds be 'um?" he inquired after looking in vain for his Lordship. Our fox could not have known his country as he passed the gorse on the lower side and was now making for Burmington, running the valley one field from the brook. About a mile farther on, however, he was viewed doubling back along the hedgerow and in a few seconds was "a hundred tatters of brown." A very sporting run, time, one hour and twenty minutes and a handsome kill, the fox being dead beaten and quite

stiff. Stovin, who hunted the hounds magnificently—one cast specially, near Stretton, being particularly fine, when every man in the field thought the fox had gone the other way—was congratulated on all sides, especially as he was handicapped by having his first whip absent through the 'flu. I believe it was in the parish of Tidmington that the fox was killed. Then came a long trot back to Banks Fee. After two of the little coverts had been drawn a fox was seen in a grass field just below Mr. Pritchard's house, hounds were soon on his line and by the way they settled down we saw scent was better than in the morning. The fox had crossed the road near Donnington Lodge leaving the Crab Orchard to the left and Broadwell to the right, then on below Captain Thursby's house over some big fences by Caudle Cop-pice, and here the grief began. Up over the ploughs near Stow, then down the hill again for Oddington Upper Ashes, turning sharply by the left before crossing the railway, again over a big country and again more grief before we reached Bledington Grounds, into Oddington Ashes and out again at the bottom end, where as we leave the covert we see them in the meadows by the Evenlode, which they crossed, luckily for us re-crossing again almost directly, and straight on to Bledington village. Here Stovin gets a view as he crossed the railway and sees that his fox, although not far in front, is far from beaten, through Bledington crossing not far from Chipping Norton Junction, over the grass fields below Foscott and we are into Bruern Wood. The first thought is for the main earths, as the fox is heading directly for them, but some foot-people hearing us coming had closed them, and for once foot-people, so often the curse of fox-

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hunting, proved a blessing and enabled Stovin to kill his second fox within one hundred yards of the earths after a most brilliant run of fifty-five minutes without a check of any description.

This was some twelve miles from the point at which he had killed his first fox, but fortunately in the right direction.

In 1885 the Hunt held its first Point-to-Point Meeting. The course was not known to the competitors: they were started below Gawcombe to ride down the vale, back round Idbury Church, with a finish over five fields on the flat towards Fifield. The Light-weight Members' Race was won by Mr. Frank Gaskell of Kiddington, the Heavy-weights by Mr. E. T. Godman. The event attracted a rough crowd to the country. One of the competitors was unfortunate enough to break his horse's back, and found that the saddle, bridle, and even the bandages, had been stolen when he returned to collect them. Six years later at the opening meet at Heythrop a presentation was made to Mr. Brassey, to mark the beginning of his twenty-first season as Master. It is reported in the *Oxford Journal* that "after the usual champagne breakfast," Mr. A. B. Freeman-Mitford, cousin and heir to the "father of the Heythrop Hunt" and afterwards created Lord Redesdale, presented a piece of plate on which the names of two hundred and eighty supporters of the Hunt had been in-

scribed, and paid generous tribute to "the self-sacrifice, energy, pluck and determination of the Master, and his earnest desire to contribute to the pleasure of others." A Heythrop fox was then correctly killed after a ringing hunt of forty minutes: the *Oxford Journal* notes that "he was undoubtedly a very good fox, but owing to the immense crowd of people he was often turned out of his course!" After a second hunt from Walk Gorse to Little Compton "all went home well-satisfied with the opening day."

After Stovin retired, hounds were hunted for three seasons by Alfred Wilson, and in 1901 Mr. Brassey engaged as his huntsman Charles Sturman, who had been first whip and afterwards Huntsman to the Whaddon Chase. His first season started well. Fog had stopped hunting at the opening meet at Heythrop, and on Wednesday, 4th November, hounds met at Bradwell Grove. Needless to say, "Squire" Fox gave a warm welcome to the new huntsman, and begged him to kill one of his foxes as soon as possible. No sooner said than done. The bitches found at once in the big wood, ran a left-handed ring round Shilton, and swung back over the road leading from Burford to Bradwell Grove. From this point they raced past Holwell, through Jolly's Gorse to Bibury old race-course, where they crossed the Aldsworth road for Sherborne Park, leaving Blackpits on the left. The fox crossed Sherborne Park to Sandpits, but was so

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beat that he could not get over the wall, so turned down for the Duckery, where the bitches caught him at the gate.

Fortunately there are still a few members of the Heythrop field who can testify to the sport shown by Sturman during the next few years. He was a master of the technique of presenting an orthodox fox-hunt, complete in every detail, to his field. His hound language was an art in itself. In his hands the horn became a musical instrument. A blind man might easily have followed every incident in the chase by merely listening to him. A very quick thinker, with unusual powers of observation, and a retentive memory, he might doubtless have made his mark in other and perhaps more lucrative fields of action. But his heart was with hounds and hunting—he never seemed to leave the kennels except to hunt—and on hunting he concentrated and developed his natural gifts.

The result was that he and his hounds were a single body: one might almost have described him as the master hound of the pack. When hunting in a big woodland he could certainly make more noise than any one of them, to keep his pack together and drive his fox out. He had got their confidence, and could pick them up and lift them whenever he liked, but they would hunt again as soon as ever he dropped his hand. A contemporary authority has called him “a quick huntsman in a slow country”—on the cold-scenting hills he always seemed to be

getting forward after his fox. Most people with some experience of hunting will probably notice something in the course of the hunt which they like to mention afterwards to the huntsman—perhaps an old hound stops when hounds cross a road, or stock runs in a distant field. If one mentioned anything of that sort to Sturman, one invariably found that he had not only noticed it himself but had noticed half a dozen other things which one had not seen at all, and drawn swift conclusions from every one of them. In his whippers-in—first Harry Grant and Sydney Morris (now huntsman of the East Sussex) and later Will Lockey (afterwards huntsman in North Shropshire and Limerick)—he found just the right intelligence officers for his purpose. They were men with good eyes who knew where to look, and between them they made a very fox-catching combination. Sturman had jumped all the classic obstacles in the country in his time, he was a wonder to gallop under any conditions, and knew the shortest way between any two points in the country. Let him describe one of his best days in his own words :

“On the 22nd of December, 1905, we met at New Barn. We found in Broadfields, ran towards Aldsworth, turned to the right over the road by Lodge Park, and over the ploughs towards Sherborne, where hounds checked, but I held them on and hit it off. I had no field-master out that day, and a big field out from the V.W.H. and Cotswold :

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they rather over-rode hounds to start with, so I turned and told them if they didn't give hounds a chance I must stop them, and that if hounds ran down the Vale not half a dozen would be with them. Very funny, they did run down the Vale and not many with them! After hitting off the line near Sherborne I never touched hounds again. They ran through Sherborne Park and Farmington Grove to Clapton, and over the river by Stenson's Osiers. Crossing the river Mr. A. Stokey got a good ducking, both horse and rider under water. Hounds ran on by Rissington Common up the hill : at that time there were no little gates like there are now. Mr. Baker from the Berkeley was with me going up from the Common. We came to a nasty fence on the bank. Mr. Baker said : ' What shall we do with this ? ' I said : ' I will take a bit out for you.' I was riding my old grey mare : she did it well, on and off : Mr. Baker came a cropper. I waited for him : the only way out was over a stile : Mr. Baker again said : ' What about this one ? ' I said : ' I cannot take a bit out of this for you,' but we both got over all right. By then the dog hounds were several fields in front. They ran to Gawcombe, not going into the covert, down the vale, under Westcote, straight to Bould Wood, and ran inside the fence to Foxholes. Mr. Baker went on and was just in time to see the fox in the ride. He was so excited he could not holloa. The fox got under the wire that runs round the earths at

Foxholes : hounds got under the wire and worked up to him, and killed him on the earths. We could see the fox standing on the earths waiting for hounds. The earth-stoppers had heard hounds coming and stopped the earths just in time. It was the best hunt I ever saw from find to kill, a sixteen-mile point, and only one check. Hounds went on by train and were back in kennel by three o'clock. Every dog hound was up at the finish, but very few of the field saw the end."

The season of 1907-1908 provided wonderful sport all through. Though the ground was dry and hard for cub-hunting, scent was good and hounds could generally run hard, and killed their cubs without much help—one morning on Adlestrop Hill they killed three brace of cubs in the open by themselves. On another morning from Sarsgrove, after some time spent in a notoriously bad-scenting covert, the order was given to let them go. They ran down to the Mill at Ascot-under-Wychwood, crossed the river and railway, and checked on a very dry plough. Wasp the terrier was running with the pack, and hit off the line up a furrow throwing his tongue like an old hound. They ran to ground in a drain near Fairspear, and the terrier slipped in after the fox. Before he was extracted he had killed a brace of foxes in the drain, and was busy with another. There were good foxes in the country and long points were frequently made. One day Mr. Brassey was shooting at Heythrop, when his hounds

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met at Tar Wood twelve miles away. They ran their first fox from Cogges Wood to ground at Coombe, found another in King's Wood, ran him straight through the Ditchley coverts and killed him by the lake at Heythrop, just after the guns had left. Another day the dog hounds found a fox in Badger's Gorse, ran him past Hook Norton, Tadmarton and North Newington, without touching a single covert, and killed him on the lawn in front of Wroxton Abbey, when Mr. Brassey presented the mask to Lord North : this was a thirteen-mile point. In one remarkable week hounds met at Pomfret Castle on the Monday and finished at Middleton Park in the Bicester country. On the Wednesday they met at Burford and finished at Williamstrip in the V.W.H. country. On the Friday they met at Bourton-on-the-Water and finished near Andoversford in the Cotswold country. On the Saturday they met at Kiddington and finished at Begbroke, within six miles of Oxford. This is correctly described as "a long week."

But these triumphs were really created in the kennel. Sturman was a good judge of a hound—he is now an acknowledged authority—with views of his own on breeding, and Mr. Brassey gave him every opportunity and encouragement to carry these into effect. Every one has his own ideal of what a fox-hound should be. Sturman wanted hounds with good necks and shoulders, combined with tongue and drive. He believed in heredity, and

never used a stallion hound without working out his pedigree, as he had no faith in Peterborough winners unless they were good in their work, with a record of good workers behind them. He bred his hounds on the same lines as the eighteenth Lord Willoughby de Broke, who brought the Warwickshire hounds to such a pitch of perfection at the end of the last century, breeding them back to Lord Coventry's Rambler and Brocklesby blood. He first used Discount by Grafton Dandy, a wonderful hound in his work, though not quite the quality that was aimed at. This was attained by mating the Discount bitches with Warwickshire and Brocklesby dog hounds. He was very fond of the Warwickshire Samson blood, declaring that Jack Brown and Samson between them could drive any fox out of Wolford Wood: at one time he had fifteen couple of bitches by Samson in the kennel. Of his own stallion hounds the ones that he liked best were Discount, Dover, Chorister (who sired a lot of good hounds in Ireland), Weathergauge, Darter, Steward, Spaniard, and Wild Boy.

There is no doubt that this period had, as the Irish say, "put great good looks" on the pack. Sturman bred a lot of hounds and drafted ruthlessly, keeping only the type he liked. The fashionable "Belvoir tan" was established, and good looks combined with a reputation for good work created a ready demand for the Heythrop drafts. The 1902 draft of twenty-eight couples only realized thirteen

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and a half guineas, and Sturman's last draft in 1921 realized over £400, which—even allowing for the post-war prices—was a generous tribute to the breeder.

But handsome is as handsome does, and with a pack of hounds the record of performance is what really matters. Mr. Brassey recognized the merits of Wychwood forest for making hounds, and would meet there at six o'clock in the morning at the end of the season. It often carries a scent, though it must always be a difficult place to catch a fox in, because hounds so often get on a fresh fox and cannot be stopped. The bitches once killed five cubs there in one morning, and the dog hounds killed three old foxes on a good scenting day. From Walk Gorse they killed three foxes in one day without drawing another covert: this small gorse was the nursery of a special breed of fox which could be relied on to run straight for the wild country on the Warwickshire border. Another hunt from Moreton-in-Marsh is quoted to illustrate the virtue of heredity in hound breeding. A fox from Bourton Wood ran towards Moreton, got onto the single line of railway, practically disused, between Moreton and Shipston-on-Stour, and ran along it towards Shipston. Only one hound could hunt the line, Deemster, out of a bitch by Warwickshire Talisman. Warwickshire Talisman was a hound that would never draw, but Lord Willoughby de Broke kept him because he was such a good hound after a fox.

Deemster, like his grandsire, would never draw, but once a fox was found he would hunt him anywhere. So on this occasion he hunted him along the line from Moreton to Golden Cross—a distance of nearly three miles—for the fox only left the railway once, when the rest of the pack flew to Deemster and proved to the sceptics that the single hound was right. At Golden Cross the fox turned into the covert. Sturman picked up his hounds, galloped round it, and met him and killed him on the other side. A second fox from Bourton Wood was hunted down the Vale, through Crawthorns to Wolford Wood, and killed near Wolford village.

The years passed all too quickly under these happy conditions. It was a period without landmarks and without changes. Presently Mr. Brassey had three sons, five daughters and five sons-in-law, all accredited fox-hunters. New entries of children and grandchildren appeared at the covert side and were duly blooded. The Heythrop and its Master became known to the outside world as something of an institution—a Hunt of character which defied the passage of time. Mr. Brassey might well have aspired to play a part in a wider world, if he had wished to do so. He did in fact win a seat in Parliament for the Banbury division of Oxfordshire in 1895, and held it for eleven years. But this experience of public life only served to confirm his opinion that he was happier and better placed in the agreeable domesticity of his small kingdom in

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Heythropshire. This appeared to afford ample scope for his active mind and administrative ability. He served as High Sheriff of the County, was Mayor of Chipping Norton, a Justice of the Peace, a Member of the County Council, and Military Member of the Territorial Force Association. He was a Director of the Great Western Railway, and commanded the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. He employed a lot of labour at Heythrop, and achieved some distinction as a breeder of Oxford Down Sheep. Besides fox-hunting, his other recreations involved membership of the Coaching Club, the Four-in-Hand Club, and the Royal Yacht Squadron. But a mere catalogue of his activities leaves the picture incomplete: whatever he did, he did with his whole heart, and in this spirit he served his own countryside for a period of nearly fifty years.

He was as methodical as he was energetic. His "Horse Book" contains brief particulars and records of every horse that he owned since his first pony—and he had owned five hundred and fifty-four, many of which he had bred himself. He compiled a complete record of every Hunt servant employed, and every hound entered by the Hunt since 1835. The affairs of the Hunt were carried on with well-ordered precision, which varied little from year to year. It was always said that he arranged the Meets for the ensuing season in his yacht during the summer. Certain small coverts were never cub-hunted, and the country was always fairly hunted.

On the first Monday in November the opening Meet was held at Heythrop, where hospitality on a lavish scale was provided for the farmers. Later in the season Mr. and Mrs. Brassey's friends and neighbours were assembled at the Heythrop Ball. Early in April the season closed with the Point-to-Point Races and Farmers' Lunch. Mr. Brassey was essentially a man of method and routine, and his adherence to a well-established system spelt success in the administration of the Hunt. Under this benevolent despotism there were no Hunt crises for the members to face, and nothing for them to quarrel about—and, perhaps because we take our pleasures seriously, such quarrels are by no means unknown episodes in most hunting countries.

By all visitors the Heythrop came to be regarded as a friendly country—with a kind of family feeling created by its Master—and it was particularly popular with the Oxford undergraduates. One of them described the Heythrop field as “a lot of nice old gentlemen in long coats, who don't curse you as much as they do with the Bicester.” Since the days of the Duke of Beaufort it has always been a Heythrop tradition to welcome the undergraduates. They provide an agreeable and sometimes necessary reminder that the primary object of fox-hunting is enjoyment. This point is often overlooked in our intense concentration on the rigours and solemnities of the chase. Mr. Brassey himself had two sons at Oxford. His second son, Percy, killed in the South

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African War, was a very popular member of University College, Master of the Drag, and introduced into the Heythrop country a notable strain of foxes from Austria which endured for nine seasons. His third son, Ralph, died after a fall at Cottenham, while still an undergraduate at New College. In their day the hunting special to Chipping Norton Junction (Kingham was not yet recognized by the Great Western Railway), and eggs and bacon at the Langston Arms after hunting, were well-known features of University life.

Mr. Brassey had worn well under thirty years of Mastership, and after 1898 he was assisted in the field by one of his sons-in-law, Captain Denis Daly, who had retired from the 18th Hussars, and settled down at Over Norton Park. He acted as Deputy-Master whenever necessary, and had every qualification for the post. He was a fine horseman and what is called "a very hard man"—he was always ready to play a set in the tennis court at Heythrop after a day's hunting, and could outwalk a Scotch keeper on the hill. He was extremely popular with the field and with the farmers, most of whom had won good money by backing him at the Point-to-Point Races.

Mr. Foster Melliar died in 1908, having been Secretary for forty years, and was followed by Mr. Alec Hall. The latter was the eldest son of Mr. Brassey's predecessor in the Mastership, and was thus the third generation to hold office for the Hunt.

MR. ALBERT BRASSEY'S MASTERSHIP

Thanks to Mr. Brassey, the principal sources of secretarial anxiety were removed, but Mr. Hall showed himself a very competent administrator whenever the occasion arose. He was one of those fortunate people who can do everything well. He was a good man to hounds, a good shot, the best fisherman in the district, and an extremely capable man of business. Mr. Brassey was always fortunate in his staff officers. The Poultry Fund was successfully administered for many years by Mr. Egerton Leigh of Broadwell Manor, the owner of one of the best fox coverts in the country, who was made an Honorary Member of the Hunt in recognition of his services. Among his assistants, Mr. Lowbridge Baker, the "Squarson" of Ramsden, will be remembered for his long and valuable services to the Hunt. Another was Mr. Byas of Wyck Hill, who could be relied on to make the peace with any farmer who had cause for complaint long after his age and other infirmities prevented him from hunting himself.

An age of progress could not, of course, leave the Heythrop country wholly untouched, and brought its share of anxieties and difficulties there, as it did to other countries—larger fields, poorer farmers, more wire, and tarred roads. And like other Hunts it had to face the situation created by the Great War. Again Mr. Brassey's generosity saved the members from financial anxiety. In 1916 he accepted half the fixed guarantee, and insisted on

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doing the same in 1917—with the characteristic remark that “in his opinion the Hunt would in the future require all the money that it could collect.” At a subsequent Hunt meeting he expressed his desire to hand on the Mastership to a younger man, adding that if “some one could be found to drive the engine he would gladly continue to act as stoker.”

The members of the Hunt subscribed for a Motor Ambulance, and presented it to the War Department. The establishment was cut down, and a lot of the best dog hounds were given to other Hunts, where they were much appreciated, and hunting was continued on a reduced scale, so that it might be promptly re-established at the end of the black period. But there are still some of us who possess the happiest recollections of a few days' hunting snatched every year on short leave from more serious business, and of capital sport shared with a miniature field and Sturman, assisted by a single whipper-in and a small pack. These hunts included two notable invasions of North Cotswold territory, one from Bourton Wood to ground in Weston Park Wood, and another from Eyford past Spring Hill and Broadway to ground in Broadway Coppice—and another hunt from Pat Cat finishing at Quenington, from which point Sturman had to get his hounds back to kennels, twenty miles away, without a whipper-in.

The 11th of November, 1918, disclosed a skeleton

Hunt conducting business as usual. The news of the Armistice was presently revealed to an expectant countryside by a somewhat prosaic method—the hooter of the tweed factory at Chipping Norton: but this was sufficient. After a brief adjournment at Over Norton Park, a good fox was found, well and truly hunted, and killed in the open. For the Heythrop Hunt the work of reconstruction had begun.

But for this purpose it had lost its best ally. Mr. Brassey often used to remark that “he was getting an old man,” but he carried his years so well that it is doubtful whether he ever persuaded any one to believe it. In the last year of the War he was still vigorously engaged in all his customary activities, but—fortunate to the end—he died without the trials of a lingering illness in January, 1918.

CHAPTER VI

THE HUNT AFTER THE WAR

ON the death of Mr. Brassey the Heythrop Hunt was like a well-regulated family deprived of its head. For forty-five years he had dealt personally with every Hunt problem as it arose, and smoothed away every difficulty. This support was removed at a time when it was most wanted. The nation had just entered on the most critical period of the Great War, and it was a matter for speculation whether hunting could continue much longer. Many members of the Hunt were away, engaged in various branches of national service, and those who remained were, as a rule, fully occupied with similar duties. It was not possible to count on a revenue from subscriptions sufficient to carry on the country. The hounds were the property of the late Master, and a provision in his will required his executors to offer the pack to the members of the Hunt for the sum of £1,500. But in the circumstances it was not considered possible to take advantage of this offer.

In these perplexities Captain Robert Brassey, the only surviving son of the late Master, though he had settled at Cottesbrooke in Northamptonshire, came to the rescue, and consented to carry on the Master-

ship, with a guarantee of £400 per day per week hunted. It was very doubtful to what extent hunting could be carried on, but it was considered all-important to retain the nucleus of a pack of hounds in the country. In view of the changed conditions resulting from the War, it was not to be expected that Captain Brassey would be able to continue his father's régime, but his acceptance of the Mastership enabled the Hunt to weather the immediate crisis. He left his home at Cottesbrooke and came to live at Heythrop, retaining Sturman as his huntsman. In the following year—1919—Mr. Hall resigned the secretaryship, as he was unable to hunt after the War, and his place was taken by Captain (now Major) Denis Daly.

After the Armistice the first task was to build up the pack again, as the number of the dog hounds had been greatly reduced, and not many young hounds had been entered. Captain Brassey and Sturman were now the right men in the right place. The former, a keen agriculturist, had interested himself hitherto in the breeding of pedigree farm-stock and blood-stock: he applied the experience gained with these to the breeding of fox-hounds, and there is no doubt that he and Sturman raised the pack to its former standard in a surprisingly short time. The new Master always insisted on the importance of keeping the blood pure, and not sending bitches indiscriminately to the stallion hounds in other kennels which happened to be

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fashionable at the moment—and thereby losing type. As a result of tabulating the pedigrees of the hounds he discovered that in nearly every case the name of one bitch appeared—Woodbine, 1899. Thirteen and a half out of the twenty couple of Heythrop bitches traced back to Woodbine. Two and a half couple traced back to another bitch—Redcap, 1882. Both Woodbine and Redcap were inbred on the female side, which eminent authorities on the breeding of blood-stock have declared to be the right system for establishing a lasting line. It also appeared from the tabulated pedigrees that in the previous twenty years this system had been followed in the Heythrop kennel, the rule being to go for a complete outcross on the topline of the sire, and to inbreed, if possible, on the dam's side.

Conditions were, of course, far less favourable for sport than they had been before the War, but the hunting qualities of the hounds were revealed on the 16th February, 1920, when they found a fox in Salford Osiers, ran over the cold-scenting hills above Little Compton, through the Barton-on-the-Heath coverts, right through Wolford Wood and Aston Hales, and were only robbed of victory by a fresh fox in the neutral country shared by the Warwickshire and North Cotswold beyond Blakemore—a nine-mile point over a wild country and through big woodlands, where hounds had to depend on themselves.

After three seasons of Captain Brassey's Master-

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ship the Hunt was well on its way to recovery. But in 1921 he found it necessary to sell the Heythrop property, which involved his resignation of the Mastership. His resignation was received with real regret, for not only were his services to the Hunt in this emergency period much appreciated, but it was generally felt that this meant the end of the Hunt's official connection with the Brassey family, and that there were difficulties ahead. It soon became apparent that the members of the Hunt would have to emerge from the comparatively sheltered life which they had hitherto enjoyed, and face the stern facts of a post-war world. The first of these was that, if the hounds were to be retained in the country, they would have to be bought; and the second was that for the future the members of the Hunt—and not the Master—would have to pay for their sport. A special committee was appointed to negotiate for the purchase of the hounds. Captain Brassey announced that he was prepared to offer thirty couple of entered hounds to the country: these had been valued by Lord Willoughby de Broke and Mr. George Evans at 6,000 guineas, and he was prepared to accept £4,500. This generous offer was accepted, and Captain Brassey subsequently presented to the country all the unentered dog hounds (nine and a half couple), a couple of unentered bitches (1st and 2nd prize winners at the Puppy Show) and a couple of bitches from the North Cotswold. A sum of £2,678 was raised by

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subscription, and the balance provided by selling securities held under Lord Redesdale's will for this purpose. The record of this transaction may be of interest to future generations as an example of the scarcity value of hounds after the War. The most ruthless thruster would surely pause to-day before endangering the lives of hounds worth £75 a head.

Meanwhile an offer had been received by Mr. H. S. Brenchley, who had hunted from Maugersbury for many years, and Mr. Graeme Thompson, the new owner of Shipton Court, to hunt the country four days a week with a guarantee of £4,000. Their offer was readily accepted, in accordance with the established principle of "keeping the mastership in the country." Mr. Graeme Thompson retired in 1924, but Mr. Brenchley very handsomely carried on single-handed for another season. Other changes in the establishment had been taking place. Major Daly retained the secretaryship, but in 1922 Sturman retired after twenty-one years as huntsman, and the members' appreciation of his services was marked by a suitable testimonial. His place was taken by Jack Lawrence, the first whip of the Whaddon Chase.

In Lawrence's first season nearly fifty brace of foxes were killed and the sport was extremely good, an event which must always be regarded as creditable both to the outgoing huntsman who has made the pack, and to his successor who has handled it. The hounds had been bred to hunt and were ready to

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hunt, and as a huntsman in a strange country has no preconceived ideas about the run of a fox, he must perforce rely on his hounds. On the 26th January, 1923, after meeting at Barrington Park, the dog hounds found in one of the park spinneys, ran by Dodds Mill, past Sherborne Cowpastures, and swung right-handed past Rissington Common, Cate Britain and Bunting's Hill. At this point they divided, and a few hounds ran on to Maugersbury; but the body of the pack carried a line into Tangle, hunted up and down these woodlands for an hour, and then came away by the Merriemouth to Gawcombe. Leaving Idbury on their right they ran down the vale to Bledington and crossed the Evenlode, which only the huntsman jumped. Beyond the river they turned left along the railway, and rolled their fox over just inside Oddington Ashes. Only the huntsman saw them kill him: they had been hunting continuously for three hours and a quarter, and not half a dozen of the original field survived to the end.

During the next few years it became increasingly clear in the Heythrop as in other hunting countries that, under the changed conditions of a post-war world, hunting could no longer be regarded as an effortless recreation incidental to country life, but was becoming a serious business, success in which entailed considerable organization and administration. In the first place the cost of hunting a country had grown proportionately to the general rise in wages and prices. Though the Master's guarantee

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had been increased from £1,600 to £4,000, the latter figure was far from covering the increased expenses which he had to meet. Various economies were introduced, and at this period the famous green plush coats of the Hunt servants disappeared, though the colour was retained. By lovers of the picturesque this reform might be regretted, but the fact remains that, from the wearer's point of view, few materials less suitable for a Hunt coat could be found than plush. Repairs to the Hunt stables and kennels had necessarily been postponed during the War, and with War prices still prevailing the expenditure required under this head was considerable. Further difficulties were created by the break-up of the big estates, due to the higher scale of death duties and additional taxation. Though the Heythrop country suffered less in this respect than many others, it was by no means untouched. The estates of Heythrop and Sarsden were dismembered, and the farms sold separately: portions of the Blenheim, Ditchley, Sezincote, Batsford and Sherborne estates were also sold—in some cases to speculators in land, in others to the tenant farmers. The former were not, as a rule, influenced in their subsequent dealings with their property by any special consideration for fox-hunting. The farmers, many of whom bought their farms at inflated prices, soon discovered that it is a costly thing to be one's own landlord, particularly in a period of falling prices for agricultural produce. They could no longer afford to ignore

any serious damage which might be attributed to hunting. Having no estate staff at their back to assist with the maintenance of their farms, in many cases their walls, hedges, fences, ditches and gates were neglected, and wire made its appearance to an increasing extent as the cheapest form of stop-gap. The wall country on the Gloucestershire side suffered specially. With wages still high, and prices for corn, sheep and wool steadily falling, the old system of farming this light land by folding Down sheep on roots or forage crops, as a preparation for corn-growing, was no longer remunerative. The alternative generally adopted was to reduce labour, and to lay down more and more of the arable land to grass, or to allow it to revert to something like native downland, and to stock it with so-called "grass sheep" of Scotch or Welsh extraction, which required little attention. If the walls were not good enough to keep the sheep in the fields, this could be effected by a single strand of wire nailed on posts above the wall. The practice of poultry farming had also greatly increased, either as a whole-time occupation, or as one of the least unprofitable departments of the farm—and one frequently adopted by the farmer's wife. From the Hunt point of view this meant heavier liabilities for the Poultry Fund. Another feature of this period, which was not without its effect on sport, was the discovery of the Heythrop country for residential purposes. Motor-cars had made it more accessible,

and the picturesque and so far unspoilt villages offered special attractions to would-be residents, so that many farm-houses and even labourers' cottages were bought and "modernized"—often by hunting people. This process had a double effect. It swelled the Hunt subscription list, but it also swelled the numbers of the field, a doubtful advantage in a bad-scenting country. Many of the new residents were not landowners ; and it is sometimes forgotten by those who wish to preserve the countryside, and the sport which it provides, that the best way to do so is to own part of it themselves.

Such were some of the difficulties which confronted the members of the Hunt at this time, and which were resolutely faced. A new scale of Hunt subscriptions was adopted with a minimum of £50 for membership, £25 for one day a week, and £25 per horse for non-residents. It was also decided to collect a half-crown cap every hunting day for the Poultry Fund. This Fund has been administered by a Committee of farmers, with a member of the Hunt as Chairman : Colonel Edward Chamberlayne has now filled the post with conspicuous success for many years. The constitution of the Hunt has gradually assumed a more democratic basis. All authority is vested in the members, consisting of resident subscribers of at least £50. 'The Members' Meeting elects a Committee of six, who serve for three years, and two of whom retire annually in rotation. These, with a Chairman elected for a

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term of years, and the Hunt Officers, constitute a working committee, representative of the members and responsible to them. The names of the first two chairmen, Colonel George Barnett of Glympton Park and Mr. George Dawkins of Wilcote, have been known in the country for more than fifty years—Mr. Dawkins was blooded by Jem Hills and has seen a fox found in the ruins of the old house at Heythrop before it was rebuilt for Mr. Albert Brassey. Within recent years practically all the principal hunting landowners and most of the senior members of the Hunt have served on the Committee. One great merit of this system is that several members of the Hunt, during their brief period of office on the Committee, get the opportunity of regarding hunt problems from inside, and potential critics are thus converted into constructive assistants.

At this time too a regular system was established to deal with the question of wire. Formerly the Hunt had relied on the sporting qualities of its landowners and farmers, and the voluntary efforts of its members, to get dangerous wire removed or marked. But even before the War it appeared that something more was required, and a single enthusiast—Mr. Jock Eustace—was invited, in consideration of a small honorarium, to undertake the removal of wire over an area of some three hundred square miles. Under the changed conditions already indicated it became clear that the question of wire must now be entrusted to experts,

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and that their expenses must be paid. Colonel F. H. Sitwell at Little Tew and Mr. H. L. Scott at Kingham divided the country between them, and undertook these duties : further subdivisions afterwards became desirable, and there are now four experts in wire removal and prevention, to safeguard the necks of members of the Hunt. The country is also divided into many smaller areas, each of which is reconnoitred by a local supporter at the beginning of the season ; these report the presence of any dangerous wire to the proper expert, who arranges for its removal. This system has been carried out on the principle of "no red boards" and "no made-up jumping-places," as it has been observed that, when other Hunts have resorted to these palliatives, they have soon become dependent on them. It gives a farmer far less trouble to put up a red board than to take down wire ; it may give a Hunt official less trouble to provide him with a made-up jumping place than to persuade him to remove wire, or to remove and replace it for him. But a Hunt regulated by red boards and marked jumping places is at best rather an artificial affair. The Heythrop country is unfortunately not free from wire ; but what wire there is can generally be seen, and is only marked as a last resort.

The removal and prevention of wire has been facilitated by assistance given in various ways by the Hunt to improve the hedge-cutting in the country. Fortunately this is by no means a lost art in the

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South Midlands, though here, as elsewhere, the hedges had often been neglected during the period of agricultural depression at the end of the last century, and again during the War. Since then the Hunt has offered prizes every year through the local Agricultural Societies for proficiency in cutting and laying hedges, and special funds have been raised to provide subsidies for farms where a proper standard of hedge-cutting has been maintained. It has also been found necessary to incur expenditure on the maintenance and improvement of some of the coverts, particularly on the north side of the country.

In 1925 Mr. Brenchley resigned the Mastership, and once more the Hunt was fortunate enough to find a suitable successor in the country, and one might almost say "in the family." Major Denis Daly who—as was once remarked by a speaker at the Puppy Show lunch—"ought to have taken hounds long before"—had hitherto shrunk from the ties of mastership. But, at an age when some Masters would be thinking of resigning, he volunteered for duty with Colonel Edwin Brassey of Copse Hill, a nephew of Mr. Albert Brassey, who had been brought up in the country. Needless to say, this appointment was an extremely popular one, and the combination lasted until 1934, when considerations of health compelled Major Daly to resign—after an official connection with the Hunt as Field Master, Hon. Secretary, and Joint Master extending over thirty years. His place has been taken by Lord

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Ashton of Hyde. It would be unsuitable for a member of the establishment—(the author succeeded Major Daly as Hon. Secretary)—to offer any comment on the success of this régime. But if the receipts at the Box Office can be accepted as any criterion of the quality of the performance, the management should have no reason to be dissatisfied with the result of their efforts. The Joint Masters took office with a guarantee of £5,000, which was subsequently changed to £4,500, with any excess of income over expenditure up to a total of £5,000. The normal income of the Hunt now exceeds £6,000, and has so far proved adequate to meet the increasing expenses of carrying it on, and even to meet abnormal expenditure on extensive improvements to the buildings at the Kennels. Perhaps further testimony is afforded by the fact that, in spite of a world-wide financial crisis, the Heythrop field has steadily increased in numbers and has now assumed almost threatening proportions.

Fortunately the Hunt still retains its character for stability. It has always been able to find a Master in the country, and for fifty-nine of its first hundred years in one family. The present huntsman has completed his thirteenth season, during eleven of which he has had the same first whipper-in, George Gulwell, now Kennel huntsman to the Sinnington. In spite of three bad scenting seasons, and three more interrupted by outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, the number of foxes killed every season has



THE DOGHOUNDS IN 1934
From a photograph by *Sport and General*

increased. No record would be complete which omitted to mention a hunt from Bradwell Grove in 1933 by Alvescot and Lechlade to Kencot, of another in the same season from Cadley through Warwickshire and North Cotswold territory to Meon Hill. Hounds ran through Aston Hales, skirted Wolford Wood, thence past Todenham and over the wild and unfamiliar country north of Ilmington Hill. Both of these hunts have achieved the distinction—like some of the classic hunts of Philip Payne and Jem Hills—of taking us right off the map with which this volume is furnished. But, with far more foxes in the country than formerly, such points are now rare events, and I suspect that the popular taste prefers the concentrated enjoyment of a brilliant forty-five minutes' gallop from Gawcombe or Crawthorns, and the wishes of the majority must prevail. At any rate, no efforts have been spared by the management to give them what they want.

Of the hundreds of well-appointed and well-mounted ladies and gentlemen who assemble at an opening Meet in November to enjoy their favourite pastime, how few there are in any hunting country who realize or sympathize with the anxieties and difficulties which the management has to face. The days of autocracy in sport are over : it is recognized that hunting exists on sufferance, and that the first duty of those in authority is to conciliate in all directions. It is an axiom that a country must be

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foremost in all good works. But can this justify their complete detachment from the matter in hand, as they follow the huntsman closely round his cast engaged in an all-absorbing conversation on the minor politics of the countryside? Then regard the elderly critic: he has no sympathy with over-riding hounds, but he knows the country and means to see as much of it as the rest. Yet his tortuous methods not infrequently bring him and his attendant followers well ahead of hounds, and sometimes even ahead of the fox. Not for these the anxieties of the establishment. They know nothing of the difficult farmer whose wheat must be avoided, or of his neighbour, who threatens to wire all his roadside fences if more gaps are made in them. They need not share the huntsman's evening regrets—how he could have killed his fox if hounds had been given more time on the plough.

But, to end these morbid reflections, it must be admitted that conditions have changed less during the last hundred years in the Heythrop country than they have in many others, and that it has much to commend it to the fox-hunter. It is so far untouched by industrialism, and retains its genuine rural character. The thin soil of the Cotswolds, and the heavy clay of the small vales, are generally unsuitable for small holdings, poultry-farming, fruit-farming and market gardens. A list of the people hunting would contain many names—particularly among the farmers—which were

familiar a hundred years ago. Some of the big estates have been broken up, and others reduced in size, but it can still be described as a country of small estates, which may perhaps have a more permanent character than a few large ones. In recent years the number of the fox-hunting farmers have probably increased. The backbone of the Hunt now consists of about a hundred residents, many of them with families. In addition there are usually a few representatives of adjoining Hunts living on the boundary, a few officers on leave, and perhaps fifteen or twenty hunting visitors. The latter are not attracted to an upland country, known to be bad scenting, where hunting is stopped more frequently than elsewhere by frost or fog. It has, of course, compensating advantages. It is tolerably free from wire. It is generally well stocked with foxes, and the Hunt pays no covert rents. Wild foxes can still be found in the orthodox way, and are not pushed out of stick-heaps or drains. When they get to ground they are left; and so long as fifty brace of foxes can be killed above ground every season it is considered unnecessary to resort to digging.

To the hound-breeder, the history and breeding of the Heythrop pack present many points of special interest. In a nation of stock-breeders it is somewhat surprising that the study of hound-breeding should usually be confined to Masters of Hounds and their huntsmen: few devotees of the chase are

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really enthusiastic about an afternoon "on the flags," when the mysteries of pedigree are unfolded, and the niceties of necks and shoulders, legs and feet, are compared. But in the case of hounds the breeder enjoys manifest advantages over other breeders. Hounds are bred in relatively large numbers, and the results of careful mating can be tested by performance within three years, when success can be followed up and failures corrected. The breeder of blood-stock or pedigree cattle has to wait far longer for results, and in view of the expense involved he must deal with smaller numbers. In these respects only the pedigree pig-breeder is in the same fortunate position as a Master of Hounds.

The original Heythrop pack, formed in 1835, has never been dispersed, and was constituted as follows :

FROM DUKE OF BEAUFORT'S

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
7 years	Dauntless	Duke of Beaufort's Ranter	his Dalliance
	Lawless	Mr. Codrington's Lusher	his Rachel
	Whimsey	Duke of Rutland's Vernor	his Daffodil
6 years	Artful }	Duke of Beaufort's Archer	his Destiny
	Affable }		
	Conqueror	Duke of Beaufort's Duster	Costly
	Rallywood	Duke of Beaufort's Duster	Rampish
	Freeman }	Lord Yarborough's Free- man	his Dalliance
	Famous }		
	Gaylass	Lord Yarborough's Cruiser	his Gaiety
5 years	Daphne	Duke of Beaufort's Duster	his Garland
	Diomed	Duke of Beaufort's Duster	his Rapture
	Destitute	Victor	his Desperate
4 years	Dreadnought	Nautilus	his Desperate

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	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
	Prodigal	Pilgrim	Garland
	Herod	Archer	Heroine
	Grappler }	Duke of Rutland's Chanter	Gaiety
	Gossip }		
	Bachelor }	Warwickshire Bachelor	Niobe
	Bonnylass }		
3 years	Vulcan }	Vanguard	Dauntless
	Vanity }		
	Whipster	Remus	Whimsey
	Laudable	Lexicon	Waspish
	Chantress	Mr. Osbaldeston's Ranter	Charmer
	Hazard }	Sir Bellingham Graham's Villager	Heroine
	Hector }		
	Vexer	Sir Bellingham Graham's Villager	Beatrice
2 years	Comely }	Chancellor	Destitute
	Capable }		
	Gannymede	Nimrod	Gravity
	Douro	Nimrod	Daphne
	Statesman }	Mr. Osbaldeston's Sailor	Careful
	Sempstress }		
1 year	Voucher	Jason	Careful
	Joker }	Jovial	Bonnylass
	Junket }		
	Lovely	Governor	Lurty
	Ravager	Pilgrim	Rapid
	Amazon }	Mr. Harlock's Archibald	Whimsey
	Active }		

FROM LORD RADNOR'S

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
7 years	Marmion	Comus	Virgin
6 years	Prompter	Duke of Beaufort's Plunder	his Rhapsody
	Volatile	Vanguard	Psyche
	Lancaster }	Leader	Volatile
	Loyalty }		
5 years	Luckless	Lord Yarborough's Baronet	Mr. Ward's Priestess
	Violet	Cottager	Virgin
	Warrior	Duke of Beaufort's Whirlwind	Sir J. Cope's Gravity

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	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
4 years	Vanguard Wrangler	Chieftain Duke of Beaufort's Rutland	Vengeance his Winifred
3 years	Cabin Boy } Clarinet } Driver } Lionel } Lutestring }	Cottager Duke of Beaufort's Draco	Vestal his Gravity
2 years	Marksman } Monitor } Rubicon } Vandal } Vocal }	Leader Marmion Granby Granby	Chaplet Vestris Rhoda Volatile
1 year	Hermit } Harmony } Hecuba } Mystery } Melody } Songstress }	Duke of Grafton's Hotspur Marmion Mr. Moreton's Singer	Gracious Vestris Vanity

FROM WARWICKSHIRE HOUNDS

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
7 years	Prudence	Bachelor	Proserpine
5 years	Brusher Rifleman	Benedict Rocket	Warble Playful
4 years	Cottager Harbinger Racer Vanity	Duke of Rutland's Chanter Edwin Rocket Duke of Beaufort's Workman	his Whimsey Destiny Butterfly Virulent
	Woodman	Duke of Beaufort's Workman	Brevity
3 years	Boxer Richmond	Bachelor Hadriri	Welcome Volatile
2 years	Bobadil Denmark	Bobadil Duke of Rutland's Rum-mager	Bashful Daffodil
	Fairplay Hesperus Melody Pastime	Mr. Moreton's Forester Lord Tavistock's Hazard Myrmidon Mr. Osbaldeston's Boaster	his Amethyst Bonnylass Blameless Harmless

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	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
1 year	Hannibal	Nimrod	Hopeful
	Regina	Duke of Rutland's Chanter	Rosebud
	Victor	Bluecap	Viola

FROM MR. MORETON'S

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
7 years	Rocket	Mr. Osbaldeston's Rocket	Duke of Beaufort's Dainty
5 years	Patriot	Mr. Villebois' Patriot	Mr. Smith's Bounty
4 years	Craftsman	Shropshire Craftsman	their Jessie
	Challenger	Mr. J. A. Smith's Commadore	his Sally
	Boxer	Mr. Harlock's Bertram	Mr. J. A. Smith's Dahlia
	Damper	Mr. Harlock's Dryden	Mr. J. A. Smith's Racket
	Captious	Mr. Harlock's Dryden	Mr. J. A. Smith's Captious

DUKE OF BEAUFORT'S

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
Entry 1835	Dragon } Dueller } Dimity }	Draco	Nimble
	Adelaide	Ajax	Bonnylass
	Abigail	Abelard	Wishful
	Leader	Duke of Rutland's Lucifer	Dauntless
	Chaser } Careless }	Duke of Rutland's Collier	Governess
	Royalist	Mr. Drake's Murmur	Racket

FROM MR. DRAKE'S

Alderman	Agent	Oddity
Judgement	Jangler	Peeress
Fleecer	Mr. Osbaldeston's Toiler	Bashful

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<i>Name</i>	<i>Sire</i>	<i>Dam</i>
Glaucus	Lord Yarborough's Gambler	Vanity
Racket	Mr. Osbaldeston's Racer	Victory
Flagrant	Duke of Beaufort's Racer	Whizgig
Flourish		
Charmer	Duke of Beaufort's Chancellor	Vengeance
Cautious		
Legacy	Duke of Beaufort's Wellington	Lassitude

FROM MR. MORETON'S

Rambler	Mr. Villebois's Trimmer	his Rally
Rosemary	Mr. Villebois's Rocket	his Diligent
Roman	Mr. Villebois's Random	Lapie
Proserpine	Duke of Rutland's Pleader	his Gamesome
Mulciber	Lord Radnor's Marmion	his Luckless
Gaylass	Lord Radnor's Governor	his Volatile
Vestris	Remus	Vengeance
Minister	Mr. Drake's Murmurer	his Volatile
Modish	Mr. Drake's Murmurer	his Rarity
Hostess	Lord Southampton's Hazard	Mr. Drake's Brilliant
Fatal	Duke of Beaufort's Foreman	Mr. Drake's Whizgig
Ruler	Mr. A. Smith's Freeman	his Twilight
Rarity	Mr. S. Smith's Radical	his Dabchick

Since 1835 only one considerable draft has been added, when Mr. A. W. Hall purchased four and a half couple from the South Wilts Hunt and four couple from the Cotswold. For the past thirty-five years, and probably for a longer period, consistent principles have been followed in breeding. Successive Masters and huntsmen have bred only from hounds whose working qualities justified it, and have observed the same rule when sending to another kennel for an outcross. When this has

been required, they have generally aimed at bringing back some of the best of the old Heythrop blood through the stallion hound selected, and for this purpose the Brocklesby kennel, which is full of Heythrop blood, has been of great service. By this means it is believed that a definite type has been established, and a type which has revealed its merits when the blood has been introduced into other packs. Perhaps the best illustration of the system is provided by a typical pedigree of three Heythrop litters bred in 1930, 1931 and 1932 from the same sire and dam. Of their progeny Amber, 1931, has now qualified by performance and conformation as a stallion hound.

It will be observed that on the top line—in tail male—Amber goes back to Chorister, 1906, by Warwickshire Tuner, 1901, one of the best stallion hounds bred by Mr. Albert Brassey, and the sire of a lot of good hounds in the Limerick, Carlow, and Kilkenny Kennels. On the bottom line—in tail female—he goes back to Woodbine, 1911, a granddaughter of Warwickshire Samson, 1900, and like the majority of the Heythrop bitches a descendant of Woodbine, 1899.

This pedigree is a good example of the general principles which have been followed. For new blood the breeders have not sent to a lot of stallion hounds in different kennels, but have relied mainly on Warwickshire hounds bred by the eighteenth Lord Willoughby de Broke, the value of which they

had proved. This was brought in by Chorister and Woodbine, and again through Warwickshire Rampart, 1918, through Waspish, 1913, a descendant of Warwickshire Samson, and twice through North Warwickshire Random, 1911. The latter hound, whose name appears in nearly every pedigree in the kennel, was remarkably bred: he traces back to Warwickshire Samson, 1900, to Warwickshire Talisman, 1893, and has at least twelve lines to Belvoir Weathergauge, 1876, one of the most famous stallion hounds of the last century.

Amber's pedigree also illustrates the practice of bringing back the best of the old Heythrop blood through Brocklesby. The pedigree of Brocklesby Agent, 1922, contains the names of Heythrop Wildboy, 1916, Heythrop Darter, 1911, and Heythrop Gaylad, 1908 (by Heythrop Chorister).

It is also interesting to record that Amber's dam Accurate goes back direct in tail female through twenty generations to a bitch called Ridicule, 1836, by Mr. Drake's Rustic out of his Madrigal, one of the first young entry put on after the Heythrop Hunt was established.

Hunting in the Heythrop country must always be a different thing to hunting in the Shires, or even in the best of the provincial countries, which enjoy the inestimable advantage of more grass and better scenting conditions. But it may well be that fox-hunting will continue to flourish here long after it has become impossible in more famous countries,

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owing to the spread of industrialism or other similar causes, and more value may then be attached to a record of sport in what has never yet been regarded as one of the great hunting countries of England. Perhaps too the description of hunting in the early nineteenth century in a bad-scenting country may have a special interest to-day in view of recent developments in the fox-hunting world. A feature of the past few seasons has been the remarkable sport shown by certain amateur huntsmen—their names are well known to all fox-hunters—whose success appears to be due first to the fact that each of them has created by his own methods a really good hunting pack of hounds. As Nimrod said of Philip Payne's hounds, they are not bred "merely with a view to flying over a country on high-scenting mornings, but to stoop and hunt their foxes." And the second secret of their success—if one may judge from general report and personal observation—is that they insist on their hounds being given time to hunt; they want their hounds to catch their foxes, and not to catch them themselves. In this respect they have a great advantage over the professional huntsman who, in an age of improved horsemanship and hard riding, is haunted by the fear of being condemned as slow and losing his livelihood.

Most sportsmen are familiar, in one place or another, with the unfortunate results of the attempt to produce pace without genius. The huntsman

advances on a favourite covert, with a well-disciplined pack of hounds, correct in form and colour, and a fox is halloed away. There follows what a sporting writer, with unconscious irony, has described as "a terrible burst"—and, as a rule, it does not last very long. The fox turns, but the hounds do not—with a competitive and well-mounted field on their sterns it is safer to go on—and it presently becomes apparent that they have no longer got a line. The huntsman instantly executes a perfunctory cast in which the hounds follow him, encouraged or even sharpened up by his whippers-in. The line may or may not be recovered, but this causes no undue distress, because there are plenty more foxes to provide another gallop, and no one wants to waste much time over a possible period of slow hunting.

Generally speaking—for there are, of course, notable exceptions—to see hounds hunting their fox without assistance one must go to the wilder and less fashionable parts of England and Wales, where the nature of the country protects them from interference. The hunting qualities of some of the packs produced by such countries are now obtaining wide recognition. In the Heythrop country a huntsman can generally be with his hounds, and galloping huntsmen, who lifted freely, have made great reputations there. But it should also be recorded that at various periods hounds have been able to hunt their foxes and kill their foxes for themselves,

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even on the scentless Cotswold hills, when they have been permitted to do so.

* * * * *

On Friday the first of November, 1935, the Hunt celebrated the centenary of its independent existence by inviting the tenth Duke of Beaufort to bring his hounds from Badminton to the opening meet at Netherswell. The scene was entirely in keeping with the character and traditions of the Heythrop country, a sloping hill-side above a typical and unspoilt Cotswold village situated in the miniature vale of the Dickler, with Stow-on-the-Wold—a well-known landmark—crowning the ridge beyond. Here were assembled the Duke of Beaufort and his famous bitches, including a selection of the old badger pie associated with the packs of Philip Payne and Jem Hills: round them the blue and buff uniforms of numerous ladies and gentlemen, who had paid us the compliment of travelling some forty or fifty miles by road from the Beaufort country, intermingled in picturesque confusion with the scarlet coats and green habits of their hosts. Many past and present connections with the Hunt were represented in the crowd of foot-people who attended the meet.

A proper November day, fine and warm after a wet night, promised well for sport, and subsequent operations proceeded according to plan. The morning's hunting took place in the stone wall



THE TENTH DUKE OF BEAUFORT REVISITS THE HEYTHROP COUNTRY. CENTENARY MEET AT NETHERSWELL ON THE FIRST OF NOVEMBER, 1935

From a photograph by *Sport and General*

country between the Eyford Park coverts, whose owner has provided regular sport for the Hunt once a month with unfailing regularity for the past thirty seasons, and the Pole Hill covert, where the Rev. Van Notten Pole used to have a good fox ready for the sixth Duke and Will Long. The afternoon fox, found in another classic stronghold—Banks Fee gorse, conducted us—very appropriately—round the Joint Master's property at Broadwell, and showed our visitors something of the Moreton Vale before hounds were stopped at Crawthorns after a very enjoyable day's sport. There were none of the asperities which are sometimes associated with inter-territorial fixtures. These have been known to provoke a sort of Test Match atmosphere, when "the image of war" is altogether too apparent and the stricken field leaves a legacy of rivalry, jealousy and strained relations between the protagonists. Indeed a similar meeting of two distinguished Hunts is still referred to as the Battle of Blankbury.

But on this occasion there were no casualties and no regrettable incidents. Good humour and good feeling prevailed throughout, and in this wholly desirable—if slightly unprofessional—spirit of peace and goodwill the Heythrop Hunt enters on the second century of its history.

CHAPTER VII

“OXFORDSHIRE,” FROM *NIMROD’S* *HUNTING TOURS*

(First published in 1826)

IF I may be allowed the expression, there are three packs of fox-hounds which *partake* of the county of Oxford—the Duke of Beaufort’s, Sir Thomas Mostyn’s, and Mr. Codrington’s. The river Cherwell is the line of demarcation between the two former packs; and Mr. Codrington has a small portion of it on the southern side, in addition to his Berkshire country. The best part of it, however, may be said to be pretty equally divided between the Duke and Sir Thomas, his Grace having what is termed “the Hills,” and Sir Thomas the Vale. The Duke has also what he calls his “Home Country,” in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, which he hunts from his seat at Badminton; and Sir Thomas has a part of Northamptonshire.

Perhaps there never yet was a hunting song in which the chase was not over hills and dales. The variety of the ground not only gives a poetical feature to the description, but may also be intended to imply that in all countries there are hills and valleys, which is true enough, for without one there

cannot be the other. In the present instance, however, the word "hills" is peculiarly applied to a large tract of country in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire. If you ask a farmer in the Vale of Gloucester what is become of his neighbour Mr. Such-a-one, he will tell you "he is gone to live upon the Hills." This is giving good latitude, for these hills extend for upwards of fifty miles across the country.

The soil on these hills being apt to be thin, and the land for the most part arable, we cannot expect it to hold so good a scent as a rich loamy vale consisting of good old pasture; nevertheless, as the substratum is chiefly chalk or lime, it lies better than might be expected; and taking into account the advantages derived by hounds being in an open country, free from riot, and always within reach of assistance, a series of good sport is not unusual on the Oxfordshire Hills.

The hill country is easy to ride over as far as fencing is concerned, and is particularly suited to persons whose nerves have lost a little of their steel. Some of the *bruising* riders from Leicestershire and other places have called it a "humbug country"; by which they mean to imply that there are no fences which cannot be got over without a *certain* fall. It is true that, taking the hills in general, an accomplished hunter is not often wanting. There are no doubles—no ox-fences—no stiles with foot-bridges, and no timber, unless you like

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it, except sheep hurdles, which ought not to throw a horse down (unless blown) with a horseman on his back. A quick well-bred horse that can go well upon wind, leap four feet in perpendicular height, and face a brook now and then, is all that is requisite here—but *he must be well bred*. When I say a horse is only required to leap four feet in height, I do not mean to say that higher walls are not met with; but the top stones are so loosely placed that if he does not clear them, they fly before him. The Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire walls are not like what we hear spoken of in the Sister Kingdom, as “coped and dashed, and six feet high,” but are without exception the safest fences that are ridden over—not only for the reason just given, but also from the circumstance of the horse never being deceived by a blind ditch on one side, or a squire-trap on the other. The greatest danger arises from the quarries, out of which the stone is procured to build them. They are opened close to the side of the wall, which in that place is generally lower than any other part, and consequently tempting to ride at. It is, therefore, sometimes necessary to “look before you leap,” though a man who is accustomed to the country knows how to guard against the danger. In many places there are small apertures in the walls, either for the purpose of letting hares pass through them, or for water-courses; and a sportsman cannot do better than ride at them where they are to be found, if

the wall is high, as through them he can see the ground on the other side.

Horses unaccustomed to walls cut a bad figure at them at first ; but the raps on the shins which^d they get soon make them clear them. I have often been astonished at seeing a horse take half the wall with him into the next field, and not have a mark on his legs. Horses which have been accustomed only to the *hills* are often unsafe fencers in any other country, as they are apt to leap high, but not to extend themselves sufficiently to clear a wide ditch.

However easy it may appear to a man coming out of a stiff *bruising* country to ride over these hills, he will find it is not so easy to his horse, and all his judgment will be required to make the best of his ground. In the first place, although the ground cannot generally be said to be deep, yet it must be recollected it is for the most part ploughed, so that it is often very heavy and greasy. In the second place, the pace is quick, from there being nothing to stop the hounds or horses, and the up-and-down hill that so often occurs is very trying to horses which carry weight. Many a hunter would cut a bad figure in a burst of thirty minutes with the Duke's hounds over these hills, though he might make a very respectable one over a deep vale ; and, on the other hand, the little spirting thoroughbred horse that would " do the trick here " would leave one of his legs behind him in some of the sloughs in Sir Thomas Mostyn's country.

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There is a very peculiar circumstance attending these hills which has often been a matter of observation ; and that is, whenever a fox has reached them, after a run over a *lower* country, the scent has generally failed on running over them. This must be attributed partly to atmospheric causes, and partly to the difference in the mean temperature of the earth.

Having given a description of the Oxfordshire *Hills*, I shall proceed to the pack which hunts them.

The Duke of Beaufort's hounds are of long standing in the county of Oxford. They were kept many years by the late Duke ; and nothing can exceed the respectability of the establishment. Their present kennel is at Heythrop, the magnificent seat of the Earl of Shrewsbury, which the Duke has rented these last three seasons (1819-22). The house has all the conveniences requisite for his Grace's establishment ; and the noble park affords most excellent exercise-ground for hounds and horses. The situation is rather on the outside of the country, which is an inconvenience ; but it is not of so much consequence in this instance, as it might be in many others, owing to the travelling for hounds being so good and so clean, which is no trifling advantage to them, as well as to the horses which follow them.

The first thing which strikes a stranger to the Duke's pack is the cleanliness and brightness of their skins. This is in some measure to be attributed to local circumstances. The skin, however, of most

animals, particularly of hounds and horses, may be said to be their complexion ; and thence we may infer that these hounds are in good condition, which the stoutness of their running also establishes. Philip Payne has hunted them for many seasons, and is a good and judicious huntsman, though now getting slow, from that cause which will make us all slow in our turns. Philip is at least sixty years of age ; and, by his universally good conduct as a servant, has obtained the goodwill of all the Beaufort family, who are remarkable for kind treatment of their servants, as also of all who attend the Hunt. The Duke himself is particularly polite and indulgent to his field, and in every respect worthy of being at the head of a pack of fox-hounds.

There is something in the appearance of the Duke of Beaufort's establishment which conveys an idea of what fox-hunting was half a century ago ; when it was perhaps *more like fox-hunting* than it is at present. The venerable appearance of the huntsman in his green plush coat—the wildness of the country—the strength of the hounds, and the few scarlet coats that are seen with them, give an appearance different to what we see in other countries. The uniform which the Duke and his friends wear is a blue coat lined with buff. The effect is *sombre*, if not livery-like, and certainly has not so sporting or so lively an appearance as scarlet. Hunting has been called “ the image of war ” ; and the simile is in some measure strengthened by the effect of

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a large body of men, well mounted, charging rapidly across a country clad in so martial a colour. Add to this, nothing gives so good a finish to a horse and his rider as a red coat, and it is distinguishable at a great distance ; with the assistance of good boots and breeches, it looks well to the last, and hounds are certainly fond of the colour.

In one respect, the Duke of Beaufort's hounds stand pre-eminent ; and that is, in the persevering manner in which they carry a cold scent over a cold country. Use is said to be "second nature," and perhaps it applies in this instance ; but I never saw any pack so calculated for the country they have to hunt over. Hounds may be too fond of a scent, but it is a fault of the right side ; and "an ounce of hunt is worth a pound of flesh," as the great Mr. Shaw says.

These hounds are well attended. The resident gentlemen of the county are almost all sportsmen ; and strangers come to Woodstock, Chapel House Inn, and Chipping Norton for the season ; in addition to which, the Duke is seldom without a party of friends in his house. When the place of meeting is within reach of Oxford, numbers of the young men of the University attend, and it is said that such as have not their own horses pay less for those they hire with these hounds than with Sir Thomas Mostyn's—the depth of the country and strength of the fences being taken into account. As far as my observation extends, I never saw them

do harm. Some of them ride very well to hounds ; and the Tyros fix upon some one for a leader, and follow him as long as they can. Fortunately for them there is only one large brook (the Evenload) in the Duke's country, and that is rather out of their latitude, being on the Gloucestershire side. This brook is to be jumped ; but it makes the field very select.

As the Duke hunts the Badminton country, his hounds leave Oxfordshire for about two months in the season, which is unfortunate for those who reside within the limits of the Hunt, though it is doubtful whether (particularly in a short breeding year) the country would stand being hunted all the season. Those sportsmen, however, who are keen, and do not mind riding twenty miles to covert, can always reach other hounds in the Duke's absence.

Some years ago there was an attendant on these hounds, which I never saw on any other, and that was a man on a pony to carry greatcoats, for which he charged one shilling, and however long the run might be he was certain to crawl up to the end of it.

There are not many hard riders in this Hunt. It is not what is termed a "bruising country." The Duke himself is not a forward rider, though he generally sees the sport, and is a good judge of hounds and hunting. His brother, Lord Edward Somerset, gets well over a country, but Lord Granville Somerset (the Duke's second son) is the best

of the family. He rides very light, is well mounted, and can go the pace. One of their best performers, Mr. Holloway, has left the country. Mr. John Codrington goes very well, and is not to be beaten. A bit of brush sometimes takes place between him and a Mr. Evans, and they decided the point last year (1821) in a steeplechase of four miles over the country, which was done in the extraordinary short space of thirteen minutes, and won by the former. Mr. Evans is an old Meltonian, and formerly showed them the way in Leicestershire on his celebrated grey horse ; but it is said he never went so well on any other : he has nerve for any fence, but is not a good horseman. Mr. Meyrick is a hard rider, but not a constant attendant. When business is to be done, none of them can beat Mr. Rawlinson : he is acquainted with every gap and weak place in the country, and no man knows better how to ride to hounds. His seat on horseback much resembles that of his brother (Mr. Lindo), as he is represented in the print shops, and on the snuff-boxes, "going a slapping pace." He has not been without his imitators ; but, as yet, they have failed in accomplishing their wished-for object.

CHAPTER VIII

"RAMBLE THE SECOND," FROM *SILK AND SCARLET*

BY THE DRUID

(First published in 1858)

Held by Diana in due estimation,
Bedeck with a gorse flower the goddess's shrine;
Throughout the wide range of this blooming creation,
It has but one rival, and that one the vine.
Pluck me then, Bacchus, a cluster, and squeezing it,
Pour the red juice till the goblet o'erflows;
Then, in the joy of my heart, will I seizing it,
Drink to the land where this Evergreen grows.

THE Heythrop began, in 1835, with Jem Hills, who came there from Lord Ducie's, and twenty-five couples, principally Dorimonts and Nectars, from Badminton. Jem had been for a considerable time with Colonel Wyndham in Sussex, and many legends of him still linger about Petworth, where he was in for a goodly amount of riding of the Gohanna and Grey Skim hunters. He played in the Sussex eleven for eight seasons, while Bainbridge and Lillywhite flourished, and was selected, from his talented batting, to do battle for £300 against Hampshire, in Sir John Cope's Park. Amid these feats with the willow, he nourished and brought up five cubs from a tea-pot, and he was

saddled with a family of six more, in a most remarkable way. They had run a heavy vixen in a small cover, near Eyfold, round and round for nearly an hour and five minutes, till Jem got wearied out, and stationed himself in a ditch to head her. Confiding in his natural gallantry, she jumped into his arms, and he arrived at the kennels with her on the pommel of his saddle. "Jem's Ditch" at Shillinglee, the seat of Earl Winterton, is also pointed out to this day, and it was there, when they had run their fox for five hours in the large coverts, and for nearly fifty minutes more in an acre spinney, and seemed as far off as ever from killing him, that Jem lay in ambush, and turned him to them by moonlight, at just twenty minutes to ten. Will Staples was once baffled the same way for nearly two hours in an osier bed, quite as small, near the bend of the Severn, which had washed all the soil from the roots; and it became at last so ridiculous to see the fox trotting after the hounds, and then dodging under the roots, that he had to go in and help them.

The echoes of Jem's key-bugle are also still lingering at Sladeland, and as he played "*Over the hills and far away*," with variations, the hounds sat up and charmed in honour of their favourite musician; and then, when such *encores* became tedious, with one wave of his hand they would go flying over the brook in a body, and swing themselves round and back, at another.

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When Jem found himself at Heythrop, he set to work to correct the short head and neck and wide chest of the Dorimont and Nectar blood, and used Rutland, Pilot, and Yarborough Plunder. The Pilots had very fine quality; and Harlequin, a grandson of old Pilot, from Heroine, by Fitzhardinge Hector, is now one of the quickest in the kennel. The Plunder bitches were decidedly out of the common, but rather apt to shed their somewhat coarse coats. Rutland Grappler, the sire of the Wynnstay Harold, also did a good deal for the kennel, but he got them rather short. A good deal of Warwickshire Bluecap blood came in the drafts, and Jem sent bitches to the Warwickshire Tarquin, by Belvoir Comus, from Warwickshire Testy. He was a light plain twenty-four-inch hound, and white with yellow spots; but Jim had marked him doing his work over some fallows on Rollright Hills, in 1845, when the fox went to ground, and determined to have a slice of him. The nick between him and the Rocket blood was very great, and Theodore, from Termagant, was so bred. The Bluecap blood in the Heythrop came from Mr. Drake's, and they were generally black tan hounds; lengthy, but rather heavy-shouldered. The twenty-five-inch Drake Boaster did not disappoint him, and got all his bitches twenty-two inches, and with very beautiful forehands, while those by Vampyre by Beaufort Voucher, on the contrary, were rather

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heavy-shouldered, and very apt to knock themselves to pieces over walls; and Cheshire Chaser, whose brother Champion did the North Staffordshire some service, brought the Badsworth Conqueror and Foljambe Piper blood into the kennel.

The twenty-five-inch Roman-headed Nathan was one of Jem's particulars, and although he was rather long on the leg, and got his stock so, he was as low-scented as a harrier, and could often carry it over fallows or along a road, when nothing else could touch it, and put the pack to rights pretty often among the cubs in Wychwood Forest. He worked him five seasons, and then he went to Mr. Hillyer's, leaving eight or ten couple of his blood behind. His science as a road-hunter was such, that if he had been in the South Warwickshire, Jem would have no occasion to renew his annual offer to their huntsmen, beginning with John Jones, to turf over that piece of the turnpike road which separates the two hunts near Rollright Hills. Nathan's sons, Nobleman and Ferryman, were great at a road, and on the last day of the 1857-8 season, the former carried it down one for a mile and a half. The others had faith, but would not speak to it; and Jem trotted behind, strong in the belief that "he never told a lie yet." Still he wavered in his allegiance, when a woman, with a sickly child, sitting under the side of a hedge, vowed that nothing had passed her way, but

Nobleman knew better, and another nose was added to the Heythrop store.

As a proof of Jem's high esteem, old Nathan was crossed with Affable. This renowned bitch was by Assheton Smith's Ruler, by Harlock's Freeman, and from Beaufort's Artful, but falling blind with the distemper, she was never entered. Ruler came with Jem's baggage in the waggon from Lord Ducie's, and was such a miserable object that Mr. Smith when he saw him as he was, and what he became, used to declare that no one "ever can know them till they're two." Affable nicked well with the Tarquin and Rocket sort, but her best puppy, Merlin, by Manager by Oakley Factor, wasted early from kennel lameness. She bred forty-five couple in all, and the greater part of two litters from her were entered in one year. Six Affables figure in the Heythrop picture, and their dam was as keen of the sport as any of them. When she got hold of a fox's head, she would tear it in pieces, and go fairly crazy with joy. In lack of nobler game, she would wander away to Woodstock after rabbits for her puppies, crown down on to them, and steadily dig them out. Lord Dillon had her, and sent her home to pup; but she did not admire her change of quarters, and made a well-meant attempt to carry her puppies back to Ditchley. By crossing the brook, and thus avoiding the village, she got four young Plunders safely deposited on the common, and she

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had carried one on and was leaving it on the steward's door-step, when she was discovered. They also say that she was as good as the blind guide on the Eastern Counties line, and that a ladies' maid, who had got lost in the wood coming from Chesbury, would have been left out all night, if she had not met her rabbit-hunting, and submitted to her pilotage.

Rocket, to whom Mystery is now closest allied in blood, was another present at parting, to Jem, from Lord Ducie, who had bred from him and Ranter, through thick and thin. He was by Osbaldeston's Rocket, from Beaufort's Dainty by Dorimont, and Rocket himself was by Lord Vernon's Rallywood, from Baroness, both of which were in the five-hundred-guinea pack "The Squire" bought from his lordship. Having once been ridden over, he was very shy, and would nip right round the horses at a check to the front. In Lord Ducie's hands he was put to Vigorous, Vanquish, Vanity, and all old Lord Middleton's best blood, going back to Mr. Musters; and he was one of the sixteen couple that came with Jem from the Vale of White Horse, where the blood was still lingering, when Dick Burton left it for Lincolnshire.

Regent was amongst the two Rocket and Affable litters of one season, and he greatly delighted Jem in his second by bringing a drowning fox out of the Cherwell, near Ransome Park, retriever-fashion, by the nape of the neck. Like all the Rockets,

he was amazingly fond of carrying the head. His own was rather a thick one, like old Affable's, and he was eventually drafted for size. Old Rocket, his sire, was a nice hound, of twenty-three inches, and invariably got them with more bone than himself. He was stifled in his first season, and then ran to head for six more ; and his death was rather a sudden one. He was sitting down in Heythrop Park, during an afternoon stroll with Jem, when he broke a blood-vessel, and bled to death on the spot. Oddly enough his son Ranter died nearly the same way, when he was five years old, in a very hot morning, towards the latter end of cub-hunting. He had run a cub two hundred yards into the Ox Copse, on Wychwood Forest, and killed it ; when the hounds were counted over he was missing ; and it was not until a fortnight after that he was found lying dead under an oak tree, about a hundred yards beyond where the cub was broken up. He was buried where he fell, and the tree is called, in affectionate remembrance of him, "Ranter's Oak," to this day.

Lifter was a grandson of Rocket's, and strained to Lord Fitzhardinge's kennel on his dam's side. His nose would have delighted his lordship beyond measure, as he would speak to the least touch of a fox, and was in fact one of the very few drag hounds left ; such as they used to boast of in the Holderness in Mr. Hodgson's day, which (as they would have it) feathered at the hedges three hours

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and ten minutes after their fox had gone through. He had this peculiarity, that he never would draw a cover, but tried every meuse all round.

Clarendon, by Ranter, did as much for the Heythrop as any of Rocket's descendants, and got a great many sandy-coloured hounds. Mr. Morrell used him; and Conqueror, who was lost on the ice along with Royalist and Pedlar, was by him. It was a miracle how the whole pack escaped that day. They were running across the ice near New Bridge, when it broke, and let the body of the pack through, and then closed and caught the three, while Clark and Will Maiden could give no aid. Clarendon himself went abroad in the draft, as his pace was so tremendous that he could go clean away from the pack, and they were always hunting him and the fox as well. Middleton by Clarendon was, in this respect, still worse than his sire, and Jem lost many a fox through him. He would not throw his tongue till he had got half a mile, and then he would try fairly to race his fox to death over the walls.

CHAPTER IX
"HORN AND HOUND," FROM
SCOTT AND SEBRIGHT

BY THE DRUID
(First published in 1862)

JEM HILLS was born with the century, which thus did a good thing early on; and he whipped-in when he was ten, and marked his pig-skin jubilee in 1860, by not having a single fall that season. The fine weather, and the pleasure of slipping down the fifty-three miles to Didcot in some two minutes under the hour, determined us to go and have a quiet afternoon with him at the kennels. On a July day, when the sun lights up the market-hall, and those nice old-fashioned houses, there is no pleasanter little town than Chipping Norton; but from its high position, no winter residence could be desired more exactly in keeping with "the man who couldn't get warm." Failing to find Jem at the old spot, we turned to the left through the churchyard, where old Zach lies; and skirting the station we found ourselves, after a walk of a mile, at the new kennels. They are more in the centre of the country than Heythrop, whose ruins, after so many decades of ducal revelry and

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hound entries, are handed over bodily at last to the rats and to the owls. Tar Wood is sixteen miles distant, and Jem and his men only sleep out for New Barns.

Although there is a pretty steep road to mount from the station, still when you are fairly at the kennels, you seem to be in a sort of bason among the hills. Jem, looking remarkably well, but with his right hand tied up in consequence of an attack of the old chalk-stone enemy, swept the horizon for us, with the eye of a general, as we stood by his garden wicket. "Boulter's Barn," of happy memory, was in front of us, in the shape of a clump of trees, clinging unobtrusively to the side of a hill; and beyond it we were requested to believe in the existence of Churchill Heath, on the principle of the groom who accepted the artist's explanation, that although he might be invisible in the picture, he was coming up the other side of the hill.

For the gazer on Churchill Mount the chain of covers which have long since prompted the saying, "Better by half shoot a child than kill a Heythrop fox," take up the tale, as the eye sweeps into the opposite valley, and rests on the three hundred acres of the Brewin, where the long and white-legged foresters have their earths; on Churchill Heath, which is too damp for lying; the oaks and the ashes of the Norrells; but alas! on no Lyneham Heath. Well may Jem bewail that extinct gorse in the "Give me back my Legions" vein. "None of

your grubbing," as he invariably says to Mr. Langston's agent, when that gentleman tries gently to lead his mind to the great subject of agricultural improvement, with axe, steam-plough, and tile: "You've grubbed enough; I'm afraid of you." Then he will propose his annual compromise, which was repeated again that day: "You may grub up Churchill Heath and the Norrells, and Sand Pits, if you'll give us back only twelve acres of Lyneham Gorse." Over these past and present battle-grounds the eye roams off once more to Merry Mouth, and up a fine hunting vale to Gawcombe Wood, looking like two globe-shaped hollows, then leaving Oddington Ashes (the noted hermitage of wild outlying foxes) to the left, and so on to the spire of Stow-on-the-Wold, the village of the noted May and October horse fairs. There, too, is Seisingcote Wood, creeping up the valley towards Evesham, and there too, almost in front of us, are the quiet groves of Daylesford, to which, "when under a tropical sun he ruled fifty millions of Asiatics, the hopes of Warren Hastings, amidst all the cares of war, finance, and legislation, still pointed," and to which he at length retired to die. Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire all meet hard by the Four Shire Stone to the right of the Park; and between us and it, as we wrap up that stirring Mount panorama, is the expanse of Kingham Field, still bearing all the signs of recent enclosure, and alive with double

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fertilizers and ploughs, in which the Herefords and a few "doubtful" Shorthorn heifers are contentedly toiling together.

The stables, like the kennels, are built of Chipping Norton sandstone, with rooms above for the grooms and the whips. The geological formation of the ground changes at this point, and the stables are on clay, and the kennels within twenty yards of them on sand. Save and except four clever-looking hacks, one of which Jem considers to be the best £25 bargain he ever made, there were no horses to be seen, as the whole eighteen were at Little Compton, in yards and other loose places. Mr. Charles Symonds's contract with the hunt ceased some four or five years ago, and ever since then it has horsed itself. Pamela and her litter of Hector puppies were the sole tenants of the loose-box of Bendigo, a great horse, but not more loved than Sailor, Betsy Baker, and the yellow bay. The field is on a slope, and a very beautiful one for hounds to spread themselves over. At the bottom is a small orchard, where they lie under the apple-trees with Jem in the summer, and dream of rich red foresters past and to come. In the snow, such is the confiding or rather chaffing nature of those foxes, although Jem has brought about a thousand brace to book in a quarter of a century, that they sometimes come to meet *him*, and a brace played such antics close up to the kennels a few winters ago, that the whole pack was in an uproar till

Sam got up and view hallooed the intruders away.

There was no maiden nurse about, and we merely heard the story of Dairy Maid, who brought up five cubs and a puppy in days when Goosey and Shirley both adopted the system. We thought that there would be some music in the Nathan key, after the clouds of chaff which have descended upon Jem's devoted head by reason of him ; and accordingly it soon burst forth, "Talk about horses ! that's a daughter of 'the clothes horse' ; I was never to get Nathans with short legs." Welcome, her sister, was not of her stamp behind the shoulders, but it is an unspeakable comfort to Jem that she wanted no entering. She always joined the pack when they came to Tackley Heath, and made a hit down a field of swedes, which will be mentioned in connexion with her to the end of her days.

Jem had then hardly set his house in order, but there in full array was the fox which got drowned in the trap. "Two dog foxes like wolves" preserve his race, as far as size goes, in the Forest. One of them had already licked Jem two or three times, so that he breathed vows of vengeance on the smallest allusion to the case. Still, amid this warfare, he is not neglecting more peaceful pursuits ; and although he has no Young Chipping Norton eleven in training to take the shine once more out of the crack Forest Club, the cricket spirit which he acquired in Broadbridge's and Wenman's day

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has not died out, and he has recently been umpire in a match at Deddington.

He claimed to have four hundred foxes at that moment within his protectorate, and barring one with white toes, which he killed at Worton Heath, he has seen no approach to hereditary white pads lately. He rather thought of getting some Scotch greyhound foxes for a cross, but did not succeed. This failure does not seem to weigh upon him, as, contrary to the generally received horse and hound notions, he attributes the stoutness of his foxes to the fact that the blood has been kept intact for generations. One of the patriarchs which had baffled him most rancorously for two or three seasons came to hand at last, after one hour and forty-five minutes from Langley to Wroughton. The crafty old foresters of Will Long's day would hardly recognize Wychwood now, as, with the exception of four hundred acres at each end, the whole of the forest has been stubbed up, and the consequence is, that the cub-hunting, which once began on the 1st of August, is now delayed till the middle of September. Some of Jem's best runs have been after a frosty morning; and when other people didn't hunt, the Heythrop would have their fun if they threw off at two o'clock, and, to use his energetic expression, "fairly fetched it out of the fire."


The last great Tackley Heath day of 1859-60 began at half-past one. Hunting had seemed an

impossibility, and in fact they dared not draw the Great Tew country, but a clipping one hour and thirty-five minutes rewarded them for their pluck. Down to February 20th it was a capital season, and they killed thirty-nine and a half brace, and then for their last six weeks, do what they might, they had not scent enough to complete their forty brace. However, their last day produced an old dog fox, who broke twelve times from the top of the Forest, and at last went a four-mile gallop straight along the turnpike-road, and brought Jem to a complete standstill at the cross-roads. Things looked so critical that Jem, as a last hope, proposed to Mr. Hall to go and chop a lame fox which had been hanging for some days about a little spinney. Still he felt sure that his hunted fox had gone round towards Chorlbury, and that, if he came back, he should hit him over the wall ; and so it turned out. Keeping along the wall *en route* to the lame un, he heard a view halloo at last, and ascertained that his fox had just gone into Boinall, so beaten that he had to jump three times at the wall before he could get over. The hounds could just hit it on the grass, but could hardly speak to it in cover, where a vixen did all the work for half an hour, till at last Helena dropped across the beaten fox, and pulled him down.

Of course, we had a cup of tea and a little conversation ; and of course, we found Jem in a most "affable" mood, in every sense of the word. We

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discoursed of the forest and its changes, which seems a very delicate subject. "It's nearly all grubbed up," he said, "and the deer killed, red and fallow; we used to go through hundreds of them on the drives. Lords Churchill and Redesdale have left only a bit of it at the top and bottom, where the foxes must fly. The old foresters get puzzled, and they can't dwell; they get lost, and dare not touch certain covers and go down wind. It's a blackthorn and hazel cover, with grass. They used to put a six-foot hedge, with thorns outside, to keep the deer out. The foxes smeused, and the hounds would jump at the fences, and lose their eyes or get staked and drop into the ditch; that's done away with now, that's one little comfort, but there's no badger hunting."

Debarred as we were from seeing Jem at this game, we pressed him to set it before us, which he did as follows: "Twenty couple are useless, if you want to kill without the brisket dodges, they can't smother or bite him to death. Five couple which really like it," he went on to say, "will stick to it and catch a badger, where there are lots of cubs about. Lord Dillon and Mr. Webb didn't believe me, so Lord Vaux came and had a night of it with them; hot supper at Ditchley. We sent a man at twelve to sack the hole. The run of a badger is very odd, , and so on. We got on to it at the bottom of the Park, and picked it out into the Oak riding. The cubs were

up, and the vixen came squalling across the rides, after the badger and the hounds, a hundred yards behind. We gave him an hour and a half in the Park, and then to ground, and brought him home at three. I used to be with the hounds under a tree, and put a man to sack the hole, and watch. They'd be out eating beans like a pig. Three and four season hunters did it best. The Rocket sort were good at that game, and Platoff was very great. If another hound spoke to a fox, he'd come back to me. His note for a badger was short and deep, and for a fox light and clear. He'd bay them, but he'd not turn them up. Harlequin knew the brisket dodge, and we dare not take him out. Badgers and foxes go very well together. They tell me that they killed nearly all the badgers in one of the woods in Sir Tatton's old country, and that there was one found next day, and it was lying curled up in the earth with a fox. They're friendly enough, but the foxes are the lazy ones, and the badgers do the digging, and right they should. I killed nine badgers the first season I came here, and some of them with terriers. Once I turned one out in the frost with a couple of my terriers, Cribb and Fan, and they shuffled along well. They held him till I walked a couple of miles and got a sack.

"Cribb would fight a red-hot poker till it became cold; his jawbone was quite bare; there was not a bit of under-lip, and he'd put out a fire with his feet. That's why they called him 'The Fire Eater.'

You had only to say ‘Kill that cat,’ and it was done. Still he would bear any amount of teasing, and never fought till I told him. I kept him two years after he was blind ; he would make his bed at the badger’s door, and get in next morning, and go creeping along by the wall to find his head. He was a biggish eighteen-pound dog, and he’d draw a cover beautifully. They would go to his cry. I have got Jack, a great grandson of his, now, and he’ll draw and find foxes with any hound. Never speaks to riot. Jack threw his tongue last season, and out came a hare. Mr. Hall was there. ‘Oh! Jack, Jack!’ he said, ‘you’ve made a mistake.’ Then out came a fox close under the hedge.”

We then tried back a little for Jem’s earlier days, when “grubbing” troubles were unknown. It seems that he whipped-in to Bob Bartlett and the Duke of Dorset’s harriers at Noel House near Seven-oaks in Kent, while Tom whipped-in to the Surrey. The Duke was a fine, tall young fellow, of nearly six feet ; and he was killed larking a horse over a wall near Dublin. “I did a little whipping-in when I was ten,” said Jem, “but his Grace would have it—he was all wrong—that I was too little to be trusted for fear of accidents, so I was left at home with the little grey hack, and precious savage I was about it. I had four brothers with hounds, we were by an earthstopper from a huntsman’s daughter, so we couldn’t be better bred. My father was a quarryman, and stopped earths as well. My word,

what a hand he was, stopping all the old quarries about Godstone! I was with the Duke three seasons, and wore a green coat. After that I was pad-groom, and whipped-in to Tom with the Surrey for seven seasons, then to Colonel Wyndham, then to the Badminton and Lord Ducie, and so on here. I knew this country well when I was with his Grace and Will Long, and the hounds used to come to Heythrop on September 16th, and the Duke on the 1st of November, and we carried on the game till Christmas. Then we had six weeks in the Badminton country, till February 16th, and then back again here till April.

"I had the present Duke here in '57. I had told him how fast Harlequin was, and his Grace said he should like to see me prove my words. Mr. Hall had a special meet for his Grace at Bradwell Grove, and we had the largest field I ever saw out, foot and horse. I like to see foot people, they enjoy it so, and they never interfere with me. I've got them in pretty good training. We killed a brace in Bradwell Grove, then we found in Winrush Poor Lot, and ran to Aldsworth Village into a coalhole. His Grace said, 'I should like to see this Harlequin of yours catch a fox in six fields.' We turned him up, and the fox came back to the top of the wall, and all the hounds viewed him. Then he ran a mile along a green lane near Aldsworth, and we had a regular lay on. Harlequin led a hundred yards out of the pack, the fox went under a wall and

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Harlequin over, up a bank to a plantation, he wrenched and turned twice all by himself, through the fence into the next field, and pulled him down. His Grace said that he 'never saw such pace in a hound before.' It was a rare day's welcome to the present Duke, and the hounds were as steady as beagles. Fast hounds are the thing, give him what old Philip Payne called 'palpitation of the heart' in the first ten minutes and you'll do. Lord Valentia says I've 'no business with more than two couple'; and Captain Anstey's only for allowing me one hound. He says, 'Jem knows exactly where the fox is going with all this lifting and telegraphing.' Captain Anstey was the only one who followed the Duke of Beaufort into his two countries.

"I blooded the present Duke at Heythrop in the deer park, close beside an elder tree, and I did a good day's work. The Duke was only speaking of it the other day; he remembered all about it; he said, 'I got a good scolding for giving you a slap on the face, but you did put it on so very thick.' I blooded Lord Granville, he was master of the buckhounds then—he'll be leader of the Lords now; he was a good deal older, so I got no slap that time. He quite enjoyed it. When the meets were at Heythrop, the two Mr. Baileys from Bath, the two Mr. Worralls, Mr. Rawlinson and Mr. Lindow, Mr. Webb of Kiddington, Mr. Evans of Dean, and Mr. Holloway of Chorlbury, were the cracks. The sixth Duke was among us then on his horse St. George.

Will Long had Bertha, Gimcrack, and Milkman then. I rode the first a little when she was five years old. I liked a grey mare, Tilburina, best. His Grace bred her, but she was a wicked one—the grooms couldn't ride her, so I begged to have a try. I made conditions, mind you, that if I killed her I was not to be blamed; and the Duke told me I might kill her if I liked. She was a devil certainly at first, but I got her to carry me as quiet as a dog horse. She was one of the best-looking ones I ever saw, and a rare galloper and jumper. I never rode anything like her. She knocked them about right and left when I had gone, so they sent her to the stud. In '26 we hunted the Forest only spring and autumn. There were 8,000 acres of it then; if they cut a place, they put a large fence to keep the deer out; it was well rided, and the hounds pressed the deer hard if they got a scent. Ditchley Wood's only half what it was. I'll tell you what, there's only one-third of the cover left in the country to what there was then. We used to pay £160 a year for gorses, which are gone—Cooper's Gorse, Hilbury Gorse, and Dunster Gorse—all stubbed up.

“The scent is twice as good from Brewin to Northleach as from Brewin to Aston, and the fleeces of the Cotswolds are better. You know pretty well how the scent is by the hounds. If there is a nasty blue mist, there is no scent. Even in Gloucestershire where the scent is far better, they'll not go into cover, make any excuse. A little black cloud will

stop them in the middle of a field ; when you can hear well, there's a scent ; if it's bad hearing, it's a bad scenting day."

Then we had the great story of the Warwickshire killing their fox at last, which despite any delicacy towards Jem must be given in all its details. " Well, you will have it," said Jem, " so you must. I had always been teasing them about never getting across the turnpike-road, which divides our countries, and they sometimes got quite riled when I offered to have it sodded. Well, Mr. Henry Greaves was master then, and poor George Wells—a sterling good fellow and huntsman, was George—lived with him. They found at Woolford Wood, and carried a good head over Larches-on-the-Hill, down by Cornwell, over the hill by Boulter's Barn, Sarsgrove to left, Sarsden Village ; they *were* astonished to see a pack of hounds there, and Jem not at the head of them. Then on to The Norrells, through it, and killed him at Puddlicote Quarries. That was enough. Mr. Greaves and George Wells, and all of them—it was our Hunt Meeting that day—they came to the White Hart and regularly had me up before all the gentlemen, and Mr. Greaves presented me with the brush. ' Jem wouldn't sod that lane as he promised, from Stow to Bloxam, and so he's quite entitled to this brush.' George Wells stood there grinning, poor fellow. Then the gentlemen said, I must of course not receive it without a speech, and they said I ought to have a

white sheet on. So I took it, and I said, 'I'll have it mounted in silver, with an inscription, *This is the brush of the fox which took the South Warwickshire five-and-twenty years to kill.*' So I gave them it back pretty well. Mr. Greaves said, 'Well, George! I think we'd better not have brought it—Jem's down on us harder than ever.' I tell the South Warwickshire men now, that I know it was only a three-legged one out of The Norrells, and that I've missed one since. The real truth is, if I can find a fox on these hills and get him over that road, and sink that fine scenting vale of theirs, when he's half beat, I can hook him, but if they find a fox in that Vale and bring him on to our cold hills, it's a good reason why they lose him.

"They say I don't like water, and they've got a picture of me stepping into it. There was a huntsman's dinner at Banbury to Wingfield, Stevens, and myself, the farmers gave it, first-rate fellows; and they were all on me about it. I said very well, when we're at North Aston, and the fox goes over the brook, I'll pound you all. Going down from Deddington next time, I called up my second horseman; he was on the grey mare Julia. I said, 'Go and stand under the thick hedge on the opposite side of the bank from where we draw.' We drew first on Dean Hill. Cooper and Selsby were great at water, and they said, 'Come along down this field.' There was a tree across, I turned my black horse loose and ran across it, and got on the grey,

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and George went back for the black. I said I should go across the brook at a place where not a man in England dare jump it, and I was right. I always go in and out. Another time when I got to a brook I kept hallooing them on, forty or fifty of those Oxford boys, and I popped down to a ford one hundred yards below, and crept up the other side of the hedge; the hounds checked on a fallow, and I heard them say, 'We've done him—we've left the old un behind.' 'Have you?' I said, and I peeped through the hedge; 'The huntsman's here, and he don't want you to hunt them.' So I did them again.

"Poor Will Goodall was so fond of the brook business. Such a carpentering he used to have the day after they had been at Melton Spinney with those rails at the fords, 'to keep the tinkers out,' as he called them. He was very fond of cricket; he went and fielded for a friend, when The United came to Grantham. He jumped about so in his white cord breeches; I had great fun watching him. I used to play a great deal; when the game went against me the better I liked it. Old Jem Broadbridge used to make me go in first, when things looked odd. When Brown came to play with the Brighton Club, we practised a fortnight throwing balls at each other's wickets, to be ready for him. I was one of the Petworth Club, and we went to Brighton to play them.

"Broadbridge said, 'Do go in first, Jem, they're

all afraid of these shooters.' I got three runs off Brown, and twelve runs in all; Lillywhite bowled me. Brown was a great fellow, six feet high, his balls came like bullets; they were all over the place, three long-stops couldn't handle them. I never lost my wicket with a catapulta, I knew how to watch the machine; I was in with a catapulta up at the Forest, and I went and fetched seven off it. I watched where he set it for leg-stump, middle, or near stump. Once I took a young Eleven to play this grand Forest Club, and dressed them. I lasted them out each time, and made 130 runs. We wanted five to win. 'Don't you move your bat,' I said to the last man; they shouted, 'That's not fair, Jem.' I got the next over, and I got seven, and we regularly chaffed the Club. I've not played them since. I always leave off a winner. Once I shot a pigeon match for £10 a side; I won that, and I'll shoot no more. I've played one single-wicket match, and beat my man, and they'll not catch me at that again. I've ridden this steeple-chase and I won, so I may say that I've never been licked."

CHAPTER X

“BEAUFORT AND BADMINTON,” FROM *RECORDS OF THE CHASE*

BY CECIL

(First published in 1854)

THE Duke of Beaufort's hounds claim distinction for having been in the uninterrupted possession of the family, descending from father to son, during a long series of years.

When hounds were first established at Badminton, they were devoted to the pursuit of the stag. Fox-hunting was introduced by Henry, the fifth Duke of Beaufort, as nearly as can be ascertained, about the year 1780. A circumstance is related which affords authority for this. At the period named, there was a very celebrated divine, a most worthy gentleman and highly respected by his Grace's family, named Doctor Penny, who resided at Badminton in the capacity of chaplain, and his bell-rope was ornamented with a pad of a fox set in metal, upon which there was an inscription, and this is said to have been a pad taken from the first fox killed by the Duke of Beaufort's fox-hounds.

In addition to the country around Badminton was another in Oxfordshire which had previously been hunted by the Lord Foley of that day, who disposed of his hounds to Earl Fitzwilliam. The Duke of Beaufort rented Heythrop House from Earl Shrewsbury for the convenience of hunting that country alternately with the Badminton, as in those times foxes were not sufficiently numerous to afford a season's sport without such an arrangement. This duke died in 1803, and was succeeded by Henry Charles, the sixth duke, in whose possession the hounds gained the great celebrity which they have ever since maintained. Philip Payne, the huntsman, was first entered as whipper-in to the Earl of Thanet's hounds, from whom he went to Lord Darlington, and afterwards to the Earl of Lonsdale as huntsman, which engagement he retained twelve years; he then hunted the Cheshire hounds two seasons, and was engaged to perform a similar duty at Badminton in 1802. This appointment he held till 1826; and on his quitting the Duke's service, William Long, who had for many years whipped-in to him, occupied his place.

I never had an opportunity of meeting the sixth Duke of Beaufort's hounds but twice, some twenty years ago, which was in their Heythrop country; on one occasion at Addlestrope Gate, on the other at Boulter's Barn. They had not anything remarkable in the way of a run on either day, except on the first a pretty scurry from Oddington Ashes over

the Evenlode brook—in which several enjoyed the delights of a cold bath—nearly to Chastleton, where they lost their fox. I perfectly well remember the aristocratic character of the establishment, and also an anecdote of the noble duke, who found it necessary to remonstrate with a young Oxonian on a previous occasion who had wantonly pressed upon the hounds, so much so as to cause them to lose their fox. It is so consistent with his Grace's kind yet impressive deportment that I must not omit its introduction. The zeal for notoriety had so far overcome the propriety of this young aspirant to equestrian fame, that he had several times pressed the hounds off the scent, which was but an indifferent one; and at length the fox was lost, when he was doomed to receive this well-directed admonition. His Grace rode up to him, and taking off his hat, exclaimed, "Sir, I have to thank you, and I beg every gentleman in the field will follow my example, take off their hats to you, and thank you for spoiling a very good day's sport."

An unfortunate accident occurred at Heythrop—the destruction by fire of part of the mansion when airing it for the reception of the duke and family. A portion was saved, which is still devoted to the use of the servants of the present Heythrop hounds. This caused his Grace to take up his temporary winter abode at Chapel House; but that was only during part of one season, and in the spring of 1835 the noble duke, in consequence of ill

health, signified his intention of relinquishing the Heythrop country. Some difficulty was at first experienced in finding a successor; but at length a committee was formed and subscriptions entered into, when Mr. Langston of Sarsdon undertook the active management, supported by Lord Redesdale and Mr. Mostyn. Jem Hills, who had been first whip to the late Lord Ducie, then the Honourable Henry Moreton, was engaged as huntsman; Edward Bullen, from the Duke of Beaufort's, as first and John Goddard as second whipper-in.

Thus was the Heythrop established as a distinct country; and the result speaks incontestably for the increased favour in which fox-hunting is held at the present period. Previously to the time when the Duke of Beaufort relinquished it, it was supposed that neither of his Grace's countries, individually, was sufficiently extensive, or that the foxes were sufficiently numerous, to afford three days a week throughout the season; they now each of them admit of four days in the week, and are abundantly stocked with foxes. In point of fact the number of hunting days is doubled. A line drawn from east to west, commencing at Deddington and ending at Moreton-in-the-Marsh, defines the northern boundary; there are only two places of meeting south of Witney, which are Westwell Village and Tar Wood, and the latter is neutral with the Berkshire. North Aston, Hopcrofts Holt, Sturdys Castle, and Begbrook, are on the eastern

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extremity ; New Barn, Cold Aston, and Eyeford, are on the western. These are the extreme places of meeting, although there are coverts which they draw beyond those boundaries. The length of the country from east to west as the crow flies does not much exceed twenty miles, and the width from north to south is little more than fifteen. It is surrounded by Earl Fitzhardinge's, the Warwickshire, Mr. Drake's, the Old Berkshire, and the Vale of White Horse Hunts. It may well be designated a nice compact country, and I feel convinced there is no other of the same limits that can vie with it in the number of foxes which it contains, and the sport afforded on an average of years. It is to the consideration and persevering attention of landlords, tenants, and the occupiers of their own estates, in the strict preservation of foxes, that such an abundance of them is maintained.

The Heythrop pack was at first composed of twenty-three couples of hounds from the Duke of Beaufort's kennels, ten couples of draft hounds from Lord Radnor's, a like number to enter from Mr. Drake, nine couples and a half of draft hounds from the Warwickshire, one couple of draft and one couple and a half of unentered hounds from the Honourable H. Moreton, and one couple from the Duke of Rutland. The custom of walking puppies being new to the country, the opportunities of breeding for the first few years were very limited, when they had recourse principally to Mr.

Drake for reinforcements ; but as the popularity of the new establishment increased, that difficulty was overcome, and they are enabled most years to put forward a sufficient number of young hounds of their own breeding to recruit their ranks, resorting of course to other kennels when required for fresh blood, generally selecting those of the Earls Yarborough and Fitzhardinge, the late Mr. Drake, and the Warwickshire. They are a wiry, active style of hound, and proverbially stout, with very great speed, admirably adapted to the country in which they hunt, some of which is not very favourable to scent. Principally descended from the old Badminton sort, they possess the good qualities inherited by that blood, although in point of substance they may be lighter, and their symmetry somewhat changed. Every breeder of hounds has his peculiar fancies, and endeavours to obtain a particular style suitable, as he considers, to the nature of the country in which they are to hunt ; and although the blood of two packs may be identical and their general qualities similar, their shape and make may be quite different, simply from the fact of two huntsmen putting forward hounds of different proportions. This may be clearly exemplified by a comparison of size ; one man prefers only the large upstanding hound four or five and twenty inches high, and another will only enter those which do not exceed one or two and twenty inches. The celebrated Mr.

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Meynell was wont to say, "the height of a hound has nothing to do with his size." By this it must be readily understood that he meant "power"; and with due respect to the memory of that great authority, it would have been more explicit had he adopted the latter expression.

Without abounding with what can be denominated severe hills, the country consists of alternate hill and vale; there is consequently much variation of scent especially on the Cotswold Hills, celebrated for the famous breed of sheep, which stain the ground to a considerable extent. Most of these upland soils hold but a fleeting scent, especially in windy weather; and when the hounds come to a check, if unnecessary time were to be lost there would be very little chance of showing a run, much less of killing foxes. Independently of this, the hounds are very often subjected to being pressed upon too closely in chase.

The nature of the country is generally favourable for horses; the fences, particularly the stone walls, are practicable; and the number of ardent spirits from Oxford and other parts do not always give the hounds the room they require. These circumstances have induced Jem Hills to adopt a system of lifting his hounds, perhaps more frequently than any other huntsman of the day; and they certainly bear it in an extraordinary manner. It was my good fortune to hunt with them nearly three seasons, and I had therefore an

opportunity of forming some opinion of the manner in which they were handled. Doubts are sometimes expressed on the propriety of Hills' method, and I particularly recollect a circumstance a few years ago which confirms me in the opinion that it is correct under the difficulties by which he is surrounded. They met at New Barn early in December, and found in Farmington Grove a brace if not a leash of foxes, but there was no scent to afford a run with either. They then proceeded to Sherborne Cow Pasture, where they again found, and Hills seemed determined not to lose a chance by allowing the scent to die away whenever a check occurred. A master of hounds accustomed to a slow, good-scenting, woodland country, not intruded upon by many horsemen, who was out, expressed to me his astonishment, at the same time giving an opinion that hounds so treated would never hunt when required to do so; and in which opinion I should certainly coincide with respect to nine packs in ten. Almost at the moment the observation was made the hounds came to a check. They spread beautifully, and every one of them had his nose to the ground, trying to recover the scent. They soon hit off the line, and by dint of hunting and Jem's talent they killed their fox after a dodging run of an hour in the osier bed close to where they found him. "There," said I to my neighbour, "can any hounds work better than that?"

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Jem Hills is actually thought by some people to possess an intuitive—it may be said a supernatural—knowledge of a fox's line, and I have heard a somewhat ridiculous anecdote of his having nearly ridden a fox down himself, without any hounds, in a covert, merely by placing himself in the ride and hallooing to the fox as he crossed; but the tale is rather too marvellous, because it is well known a fox will not continue on the move—more especially he will not cross open spaces, unless pressed by hounds. Neither can I believe Hills ever perpetrated such an unsportsman-like act. If a huntsman does not know the run of the foxes, he does not know a most important part of his business. Of Jem Hills' talent I have a very high opinion, and whatever may be said against his system of lifting his hounds I maintain that it is a practice thoroughly adapted, and I may add, indispensable to sport in that country. To see these hounds draw the hanging covert at Eyeford or Jolly's Gorse (a favourite covert near to Bradwell Grove) is a treat worth riding any distance to enjoy. The alacrity which Hills displays in getting his hounds away and on the line when a fox has broke covert exceeds that of any man I have ever yet seen, Mr. Osbaldeston not even excepted; and it is one of the most important operations towards attaining a good run with blood at the finish.

After three or four years' practice as underwhip

John Goddard was promoted, and a more effective one never turned a hound. He entered on the duties of first whip some ten or twelve years ago, since which the White Hart at Chipping Norton being vacant, he determined to try his hand at inn-keeping. That, however, did not suit his taste long ; and he has again entered into the service of the chase.

During the last twelve years the Heythrop country has been entirely under the control of Lord Redesdale. A more popular master of hounds cannot exist. His lordship's devoted attention to parliamentary duties occasions his absence from the field more frequently than those who hunt with these hounds would wish. After business commences in the House Lord Redesdale almost invariably repairs to London. It was reported at one period, in consequence of the railway which now passes through the country but which was then only in anticipation, that his lordship would no longer keep on the hounds. Fortunately, however, that intention was abandoned, and it is cheering to observe that railways do not prove the impediments to fox-hunting that they were expected to do.

It is not always—perhaps with more propriety I might say *it is not often*—that any man has it in his power to lead that course of life which he most desires. If I had the good fortune to possess an income adequate to the expenses I should cer-

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tainly prefer Leicestershire before any other country to hunt in. But not being so ambitious, I should be perfectly contented with three or four good horses, with a convenient house and stabling in a central part of the Heythrop country. It is not one in which the wear and tear of horseflesh is great; there are decidedly more than an average of good runs during the season; it is an agreeable country to ride over; and the noble owner of the pack is a most affable and accomplished sportsman.

CHAPTER XI

“THE HEYTHROP HOUNDS AND COUNTRY,” FROM *HUNTING TOURS*

BY CECIL

THE great diversity of country which signalizes this far-famed district, highly interesting as it is to those who follow hounds o’er hill and dale, is anything but conducive to scent, therefore, to ensure runs, it is imperatively necessary in breeding hounds that the essential faculty of nose be studied with the utmost care.

On the north-western boundary, about Moreton-in-the-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold, stone walls, hedges, and ditches, with occasionally the Evenload and Kingham brooks to negotiate, call forth the instincts of accomplished hunters; and a similar description of country is continued southward along the borders of the Cotswold Hunt to Farmington Grove and New Barn, although in that neighbourhood the walls predominate, as they do, also, on the borders of the V.W.H. This portion includes the well-known Bradwell Grove, an appointment much patronized by Oxonians, who significantly regard it as imperative to their present and future happiness to apportion their studies between Pro-

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fessor Hills and the more dignified authorities of the University. The vicinity of Bradwell Grove is the *beau ideal* of a stone-wall country. Central, on the southern extremity, is Wychwood Forest, a vast portion of which has latterly been broken up, and here a similar variety of fences present themselves; while near to Blenheim, verging on the Bicester Hunt, there is much strong soil of holding nature. Approaching Deddington there is a fine tract of country, from whence, striking a line westward to Moreton-in-the-Marsh, the confines of the Warwickshire Hunt are represented. The nature of the fences may be accepted as descriptive of the quality of the soil. Where the walls prevail the land is arable; hedges and ditches denote pasture fields, which in wet weather are deep and holding. It may well be designated a nice compact country, the greatest extent from east to west not exceeding twenty-four miles, and its breadth seventeen. But then it is well stocked with foxes. The Bourton woods are always well tenanted, and the name of Lord Leigh, as the owner of the coverts at Addlestrop, is a sufficient indication that if there were not an abundance of foxes the keepers would no longer hold their appointments. A few years since the well-merited compliment, the presentation of a cup, was conferred on Mr. Pratt for his indefatigable guardianship at Bruern and Tangle. Mr. Waller at Farmington, and Lords Dynevor and Sherborne, whose estates are in proximity, are alike devoted to

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the welfare of the Hunt ; while at Heythrop, since the Earl of Shrewsbury has kept the coverts in his own possession, the foxes are carefully protected. Lord Macclesfield's mandates are imperative at Ensham, and equally so are Lord Dillon's at Ditchley. Foxes abound at Blenheim, and the Duke of Marlborough contributes to the funds. Barton was always well stored during the lifetime of Mr. Hall, and his son and successor pays the affectionate tribute to his respected father's memory by following in his footsteps. So likewise the coverts at Tackley are as well cared for by Mrs. Evetts as they were during her late husband's time. Tarwood, on Mr. Harcourt's estate, is invariably well tenanted, under the supervision of his steward, Mr. John Lord, a staunch friend, whose hospitalities are extended to men, horses, and hounds, whenever they visit that extremity of the country.

It was with great regret I heard in a distant quarter of a keeper having been discharged for want of due respect to the foxes, and that his master, with charitable forbearance and kindness, on taking the man again into his services, found himself deceived, and compelled finally to carry into effect his first intention. The publication of this inefficient keeper's name would be a salutary caution to him and others of his craft, and would be the best means of checking the reprehensible system of fox destruction.

The antecedents of this country are ancient and

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of a truly aristocratic order. During the latter portion of the eighteenth century the Lord Foley of that day introduced a very superior pack of hounds into the county of Oxford; but it must be observed this was a predecessor of the noble lord who hunted the Quorn and Worcestershire countries. The present limits of the Heythrop Hunt were not, however, then defined, neither was it recognized by that descriptive term. Long before the present century the Badminton country not affording sufficient scope for the sporting spirit inherent in the ducal family of Beaufort, and keenly exemplified in the fifth Duke, his Grace undertook to hunt this country two alternate months. Where he resided I know not. The sixth Duke lived for many years at Cornbury Park, and the hounds were also kept there. When the late Lord Churchill inherited that place and came to reside there, his Grace took Heythrop House, and kennels, with a view to temporary convenience, were erected in the park. In the year 1802 Philip Payne was engaged as huntsman at Badminton, having previously occupied a similar position in Cheshire, and with the Cottesmore Hounds. An anecdote is related of him on his arrival at Badminton, illustrative of his introducing a new system of kennel management. After having fed the hounds, and about to walk them out into the park, the whippers-in proceeded, as had been their custom, to couple up the hounds. "Oh, take those couples away," he exclaimed, "we

don't want them." To which a whipper-in rejoined, "We always couple them, sir, that they may not break away after the deer." Philip's order, however, was imperative, and the hounds evinced no disposition to riot, much to the astonishment of the whippers-in. For a quarter of a century this veteran of the chase accompanied the hounds on their visits to Heythrop, improving the pack and showing capital sport. Great and glorious were the doings in those days. Chapel House, a highly famed caravansary, handy to the kennels, affording the very best of fare, was patronized by those members of the Hunt who were compelled either to leave their Badminton homes or forgo the pleasures of fox-hunting during the absence of the hounds. The expenses and inconveniences our forefathers necessarily encountered are happily averted by divisions of countries and other changes in our social habits. Age and infirmities working on Philip, in 1826 he resigned his horn in favour of William Long, under whose care the Duke of Beaufort's Hounds continued to hunt this country till the spring of 1835, when, in consequence of ill health, his Grace signified his intention to confine his hunting to the neighbourhood of Badminton. A few years previous to the Duke's resignation a portion of the mansion of Heythrop was destroyed by fire; thus being deprived of a residence, the Duke made the Ranger's Lodge, in Wychwood Forest, his temporary abode during a part of the season after the

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occurrence of the disaster, the hounds continuing to occupy the Heythrop kennels. In the November of the year when the noble Duke withdrew the hounds, which for so many years had afforded such magnificent sport, his Grace was called "to that bourne from which no traveller returns," but not without making a lasting impression on the hearts of all who had the good fortune to participate in his innumerable acts of courtesy and kindness.

It was supposed in those days that the two countries could not individually contain foxes sufficient for two packs of hounds, and much difficulty existed; but a committee was eventually formed, and the requisite funds raised, the management being vested in Mr. Langston, aided by the powerful influence of Lord Redesdale. A huntsman had to be engaged and a pack of hounds procured, more of which as I proceed. A triennial mastership terminated Mr. Langston's prominent and popular efforts, to whom succeeded Lord Macclesfield, then Mr. Parker. In 1840, Lord Clonbrock was at the head of affairs for a period similar to that of Mr. Langston. During the succeeding twelve years Lord Redesdale took the entire control, conducting everything with that excellent judgment, taste and discrimination which is ever essential to happy results, and most felicitously were they fulfilled. The duties of the Upper House prevailing over all other considerations in the estimation of his lordship, after the annual business had commenced, his occasional

absence in the hunting field was a source of much regret, for no master of hounds was ever more popular, or any whose opinions on hunting matters were more valued and respected. On Lord Redesdale's withdrawal from the active duties of M.F.H., in 1855, Mr. Hall was induced to occupy that ostensible position. A better sportsman, a better manager, a better master, or a better judge of hounds and hunting could not have been selected. I might be accused of flattery, but, alas ! he has gone to those realms where no flattery can reach him. It is only a just tribute to his memory to say, and to which I am certain every sportsman and every individual in the Heythrop country will respond, that he possessed every good quality a country gentleman could possess. In the spring of the past year ill health compelled Mr. Hall to relinquish his trust, when Colonel Thomas, who had astonished the Turks with a pack of fox-hounds during the Crimean War, was appointed as his successor. At the conclusion of one brief season this arrangement terminated, and, greatly to the delight of all who are interested, Lord Redesdale has again undertaken the responsibilities he so ably conducted before.

I must now try back to Jem Hills and the hounds, and although the latter are accustomed to take precedence in the field, I think the huntsman may be entitled to that compliment on paper. His career has been an eventful and fortuitous one, affording a pleasing example of what may be effected

by integrity of purpose and steady conduct. At the early age of ten he was turned adrift upon the world to seek his fortune, with nothing more to ensure his advancement than a suit of clothes and a shilling in his pocket. He soon got into the service of the Duke of Dorset, and was initiated in the mysteries of whipping-in to a pack of harriers in Kent; where he also attended his Grace as pad-groom. But in consequence of an unfortunate and fatal accident which befel the Duke in Ireland, the establishment was broken up. Hills then got an engagement to ride second horse and assist in whipping-in for Mr. Maberly, among the hills and flints of Surrey, where his elder brother, Tom, was huntsman. When little more than eighteen he gained a step as kennel huntsman and head whip to Colonel Wyndham, remaining there till the breaking up of the establishment in 1826, whereupon he came to London, and the Duke of Beaufort offering him a vacant second-whip's appointment, although it might be considered a retrograde movement, he had the good sense to undertake it; William Long at that time being huntsman, and William Todd first whip. At Badminton, Hills continued five seasons, when he engaged himself to the late Earl Ducie, then the Hon. H. Moreton, who had just commenced hunting the Vale of White Horse. Here he had a fine opportunity of improving practically on the observations he had made, as a new pack was formed from drafts. At

the termination of the succeeding five years, the Heythrop country being established, he was engaged as huntsman, where he has remained ever since, esteemed and regarded by all classes with whom he is concerned. Some years ago, from over-exertion, he had the misfortune to rupture a blood-vessel, and for two seasons his nephew, George Hills, took the horn; but fortunately rest restored him, and, as all good ones do, "he came again" as cheery as ever.

The foundation of the pack was laid with twenty-five couples from the Duke of Beaufort's, twenty-one couples from Lord Radnor's, which did not turn out satisfactorily, ten or twelve couples from Lord Ducie's, including Rocket, whose descendants do him great credit, a couple and a half, unentered, of bitches from Mr. Drake's, and an unentered draft from the Warwickshire. The following season four couples and a half were added from Mr. Drake's, two couples of which were bitches. These hounds proved very valuable. It is probable they were a second draft, nearly equivalent to being picked. These, it must be understood, with the exception of those from Mr. Drake, were selections, not drafts, from which it is a fallacy to suppose that any man can form an efficient pack for very many years. On the subject of drafts I will quote an extract from a letter of a very eminent master of hounds, who writes: "Except some old family packs, very few can call

themselves self-constituted, and all who have anything to do with the breeding hounds, know that on such packs only can reliance be placed for keeping up the fox-hound in his full excellence, not merely of form and substance, but of the more material points of nose and staunchness." I will, however, venture to introduce a remark on this subject, for even in the old-established packs there are certain strains of blood which run in families so much more valuable for the powers of transmitting good qualities to their progeny, that it is only by the exercise of great judgment and experience that the satisfactory results will follow.

Of late years the Heythrop have never made up their entry from other packs, and to Hills is due all the credit of making them what they now are. He has not roamed promiscuously for sires, confining himself principally to the Belvoir, the Badminton, the Brocklesby, Lord Fitzwilliam's, and the Berkeley kennels, not, however, overlooking the Warwickshire Tarquin, that he was the first to patronize. Observing that hound when, I think, only in his second season, carrying a very low scent, he expressed a wish to secure his services, when it was objected that he was too plain to breed from, and somewhat inclined to be leggy; but Jem was not to be beaten from his point; he wanted nose, and the personal inelegances he argued he could correct by careful selections of partners. He had the hound, and most valuable are his descendants.

The Brocklesby Plunder rendered vast service, and the Berkeley Nathan has faithfully conveyed the good quality of his ancestors. This hound I had occasion to mention in my visit to the Worcestershire kennels, alluding at the same time to his brother, Neighbour, a great favourite in Lord Gifford's pack, remarkable for the fine coats he transmitted to his progeny, a characteristic which I find appertains also to Nathan.

The principal stud hounds bred at these kennels, whose progeny are inheriting the good qualities of their race, are Mercury, a son of Manager and Whirlwind; the sire conveys the Oakley blood through their Factor. Ajax introduces a good strain from Mr. Foljambe's Victor, with Affable. There is now a valuable infusion from the Belvoir kennels to be seen in two brothers, Harlequin and Hamlet, by their Pilot, and Heroine, a daughter of the Berkeley Hector and Pamela. Hills considers Harlequin to be the fastest hound he ever saw, and his looks confirm the opinion. A finer-shaped hound can scarcely be imagined. With length and true proportions, there are in him combinations of quality indicating high breeding and all the true characteristics of the Belvoir family. He is remarkably fine about and below his hocks, I might say rather light, but his thighs are good. His head, neck, shoulders, body, and loins are superlative; his colour, a rich black and tan, with a little white, and a few tick marks, is the true

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representative of the blood from which he comes. Granby is a son of the Belvoir Grappler and Gipsy, Proctor, by the Belvoir Pilot, and Gaiety, a daughter of the Belvoir Grappler and Gipsy, are full of Belvoir lineage. Granby and Gaiety, although brother and sister, are not of the same litter. Ferryman is by Nathan and Fanciful, and has very clever representatives in Waspish, Welcome, and Whirlwind, descended from Wakeful, in their third season. Middleton, who traces back to Rocket, one of the first inmates of these kennels from Earl Ducie's pack, is a son of Pilgrim and Mindful; Pilgrim, by the Badminton Fleecer, or, more correctly, Mr. Morrell's Fleecer, as he was bred by that gentleman from the Berkeley Furrier and his own Heroine, and included in a lot which the Duke of Beaufort purchased at the Tubney sale. Middleton is the sire of several very useful hounds in their second and third seasons. Ranger, a four-season hunter, possesses the fine symmetry of his sire, Harlequin. Murmurer, a year his senior, a son of Mercury and Heedless, on short, good legs, will proclaim his pretensions as a progenitor in the entry of next season. Modish, a wonderfully handsome hare-pied matron, descended from Mercury. Affable, having had for her lover the Brocklesby Fairplay, is well represented by Famous, Flourish, Foreman, and Forester. Factor, a young hound, entered this season, takes my fancy immensely, and if he proves as good in his work as

he is on the flags, I must give him the precedence over any other of his year. He is the son of the Duke of Beaufort's Foiler and Needful, a granddaughter of Nathan. Foiler is descended from Falstaff, a sire of much repute at Badminton. Precious, a daughter of the North Staffordshire Pilot, with great depth, and a fine imposing frame, looks like producing a family of high pretensions. Rachel, Racket, Rambler, Rapture, Rector, and Remnant claim much of the kennel heritage to which they are ornaments. They are the produce of Jonathan and Rally. The former is a son of Clarendon, and Rally is a daughter of Lord Fitzwilliam's Richmond. Short legs, good bone, and activity characterize this litter, and I can speak in high terms of Racket and Rector in their work. Rakish, Resolute, Rhapsody, and Rosalind claim Harlequin as their sire and Ransom as their dam, and are well worthy of their parentage, the stamp of their father being most impressively conveyed.

In breeding these hounds Jem Hills has adopted a most important principle—never to overlook the necessity of endeavouring to obtain good noses and working qualities. Since I last saw them, four years ago, they are certainly improved in their appearance, being shorter on the leg, and with quite as much bone as is compatible with activity. To Hills is due all the credit, as he has exercised his own judgment, uninfluenced from the first. It is not the pack only that is entrusted to his care, but

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also the horses, of which there are fifteen or sixteen very useful animals : indeed the whole establishment is under his supervision.

The kennels at Heythrop, which were in use for many years, were only erected with a view to temporary accommodation for the Duke of Beaufort's Hounds when they paid their accustomed visits, and they were very unhealthy. Some four years ago new ones were erected about a mile from Chipping Norton on the left of the road to Moreton-in-the-Marsh, and they possess every necessary convenience. There are many allurements to this neighbourhood, especially for those who prefer a quiet winter's sport without encountering the costly expenditure and revelling in the gaieties of more populous hunts. There is a good hotel at Chipping Norton, and stabling to a great extent can be obtained at Mr. Biggerstaff's, whose love of horses prompts him to combine his wool-stapling speculations with ample and complete accommodation for hunters ; and if any of his well-finished boxes are not tenanted by visitors' horses they are generally filled with his own, which are all of high pretensions. Still there is the all-powerful attraction, a very first-rate pack of hounds ; and to hear Jem Hills' cheer, when they first find their fox, and his still more exciting and inimitable halloo, when he breaks away, is worth riding any distance to enjoy.

I do not believe any pack of hounds have this

year, up to Christmas, 1862, had to boast of great sport, not, indeed, an average; but these have experienced more than most others. In the early days of the season they had a capital day's sport from Eyeford. After drawing those favourite coverts without a challenge they adjourned to Slaughter Copse, where, finding, they ran merrily over the hill, leaving Eyeford House on the left, to Slaughter Village, and, with grass all the distance to Slaughter Copse, away again for Swell Bowl, up the hill to Stow-on-the-Wold, where the fox was headed back to Upper Swell, and made his point straight up the hill to Foley's Gorse, and in one hour and thirty minutes the gallant pack ran into him at the farmyard at Donnington. The Crawthorne not holding a fox they went on to Sezincote Gorse, from whence a fine fox broke for the Crawthorne, leaving the village on the left for Moreton-in-the-Marsh, leaving that town also on the left, through Batsford Park, across the turnpike road near Bourton Wood, when, hearing the Cotswold hounds, the fox headed short back for Lord Redesdale's park, where the hounds rolled him over, close under the wall, after a clipping burst of twenty-five minutes.

Bledlington Mill being in the midst of a good country, I made choice of that place to see the hounds in the field. There was rather a numerous assemblage, honoured by the presence of the Prince de Joinville, the Duke de Chartres, and a son of

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the Duke d'Aumale. Lord Redesdale was also among the number, and his interest in the proceedings of the day did not appear in the least to have diminished. Bruern Wood was visited—a covert of some extent, where, in bygone days, I have seen foxes requiring a vast deal of eloquent persuasion to induce them to leave, but it was not so on this occasion. The presence of the hounds appeared to be by no means welcome, and scarcely had they announced that there was a fox at home than a brace was viewed away. With the alacrity Jem Hills is wont to adopt, actively seconded by his son Tom, and Charles Roberts, the under-whip, the hounds were quickly out of cover, and, settling to the scent by Mr. Langston's Farm, ran at a merry pace to the Norrels, and leaving Merriscourt Farm on the left, reached Puddlicot Quarries, where there was a check. It was anything but a good scenting day, and all Jem's acknowledged skill and the exquisite hunting powers of the pack were called in requisition. Making one of his able casts, the hounds hit off the line across the Chipping Norton road, and across the Burford road among the stone walls. Leaving Chadlington on the right, the fox headed short back, crossing the Burford and Chipping Norton road for Sarsgrove. Here the greater portion of the field, who appeared to have come to the conclusion that the run was over, quietly waited in the road; but the fox went straight through the cover, and over the

hill to Boulter's Barn, leaving it on the right, across the Chipping Norton and Churchill road, down to Kingham Brook, over which Major Shirley and Tom Hills were the only two who rode. In Kingham fields there was a check, when a halloo back by the mill set all right again, and the hounds ran merrily for Churchill heath, leaving Churchill village on the left to Mr. Langston's pleasure grounds, where, among the shrubs, there was of course little or no scent, and here Hills' masterly tactics served him. Instead of leaving his hounds to contend with a difficulty verging on impracticability, he held them on to the extremity of the plantations, where, as the fox had left, they got again on fair terms, and ran him up to the Burford and Chipping Norton road, close to Puddlicot Quarries ; having him dead-beat, the hounds were evidently running into him, but they were defeated, either by a sheep-dog or some greyhounds which were near to the spot where they suddenly checked, and could never hit the line of the fox a yard afterwards. The hounds well deserved blood, as none could behave better than they did, driving gloriously and carrying a good head when there was a scent to serve them, and when there was not, hunting with the greatest perseverance. Primrose, Mystery, Sailor, Racket, and Rector particularly distinguished themselves.

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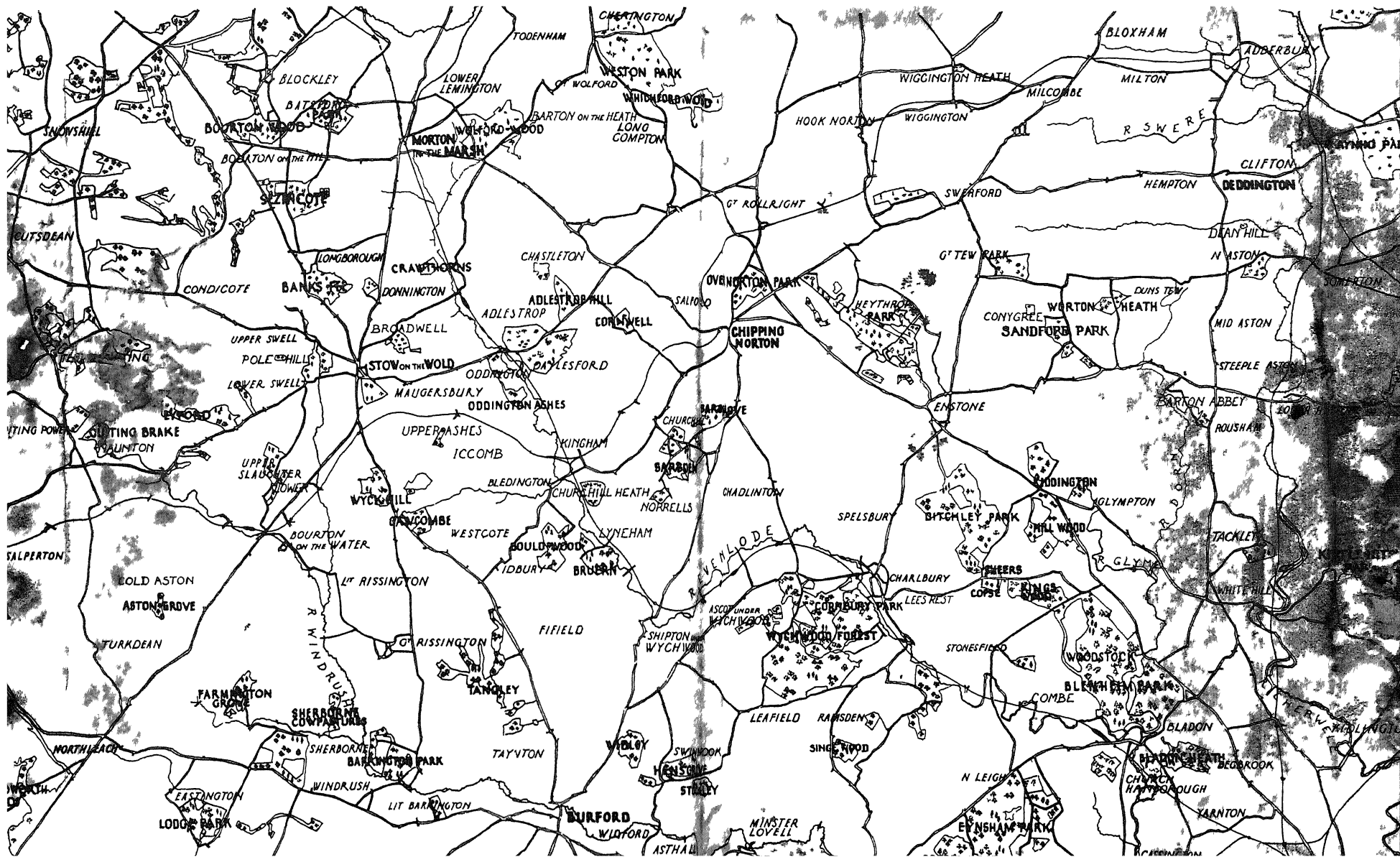
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